

GREEK DRAMA and the Invention of Rhetoric



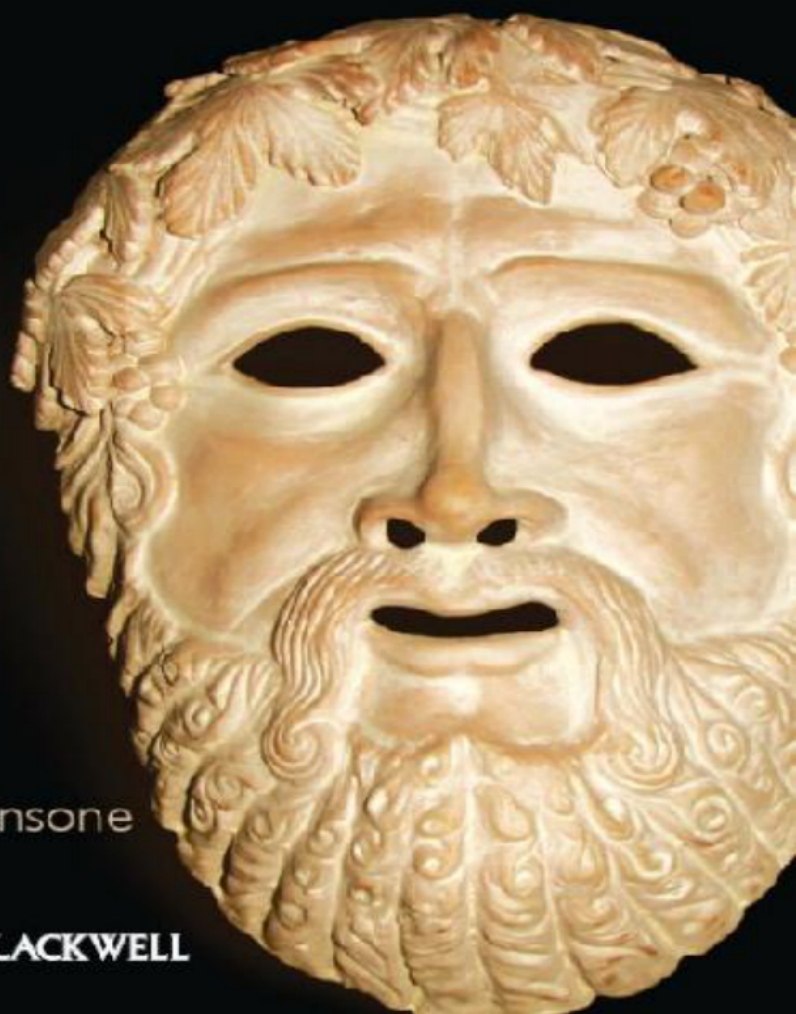
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David Sansone

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publication

This edition first published 2012
© 2012 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wiley-Blackwell is an imprint of John Wiley & Sons, formed by the merger of Wiley's global Scientific, Technical and Medical business with Blackwell Publishing.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sansone, David.

Greek drama and the invention of rhetoric/David Sansone.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-118-35708-8 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Rhetoric--History. 2. Greek drama--History and criticism. I. Title.

PN183.S26 2012

808.009--dc23

2012011202

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Jacket image: Greek theatre mask © Repina Valeriya / Shutterstock

Jacket design by Nicki Averill

For Alexander and Nicolas

οὐτ' ἀνομοιοτέρους κε κασιγνήτους ποτ' ἐφεύροις,
οὔτε βεβαιοτέρους ἐν φιλότητι πατρός.

la philologie mène au crime
Eugène Ionesco

Preface

In his review of Lorna Hutson's *The Invention of Suspicion*, a book concerned with the transformative influence of legal terminology and rhetoric on Renaissance drama, Peter Holbrook writes that "the move from a primarily symbolic or gestural drama" to the more realistic theater of Shakespeare and his contemporaries "is dazzling, an innovation as momentous as when silent movies gave way to the talkies, or Hollywood adopted Technicolor; at the time, people must have felt a new world had been discovered." Oddly missing from Holbrook's comparanda is the momentous creation of the cinema itself, or the invention of drama. The thesis of the book that you hold in your hands or that momentarily occupies your digital display is that, first, the invention of the drama in Athens around 500 BC was at least as dazzling and momentous an innovation as the introduction of Technicolor; and, second, that this revolutionary innovation inspired the formal study of rhetoric. The first part of this thesis is uncontroversial, perhaps even self-evident; the second part is heretical.

Ever since the time of Aristotle, it has been an article of faith that the drama became more rhetorically sophisticated in the fifth century BC *as a result of* its exposure to the influence of rhetorical theorists and teachers. But the origins of rhetoric are so uncertain, and the accounts of those origins so confused and unsatisfactory, that we ought not to rely on faith when, it is proposed, a more reasonable explanation of the relationship between rhetoric and the invention of the drama is available. Specifically, I will argue that the essential feature of the drama – that the playwright is required to compose speeches for characters, who are often in a state of conflict, to use in interaction with one another before an audience in the theater – is sufficient to account for the self-conscious theorizing about forms of argumentation that is the essential feature of formal rhetoric. And, since the development of formal rhetoric is acknowledged, even by those who adhere to the traditional account, to be later than the invention of the drama, it would seem appropriate to entertain the possibility that rhetoric owes more to the drama than vice versa. Still, the authority of Aristotle and the seductive force of longstanding tradition are formidable obstacles to overcome, especially given the nature of the available evidence. And so it will be necessary to argue in support of this thesis at some length. It is hoped that even those

readers who are not, in the end, convinced by the arguments presented here will at least find that it has been invigorating to have their faith tested.

Polite audiences in Chicago, New Haven, and Urbana have been subjected to having their faith, and perhaps their patience, tested by oral presentations of some of the arguments advanced in this book. I am grateful for their indulgence and their valuable comments. I am also grateful for the financial support of the Loeb Classical Library Foundation, which made possible a sabbatical leave that was devoted to work on the early stages of this project. Jonathon Auxier, Victor Bers, Tom Conley, Scott Garner, John Gibert, Donald Mastronarde, and Doug Olson have all contributed in various ways; I thank them for their assistance and their personal support, which, I hasten to add, does not necessarily extend to their support of the thesis argued here. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to my editor at Wiley-Blackwell, Haze Humbert, and to the reader for the press, whose healthy skepticism has caused me to reformulate a number of my more confident statements.

Part I

What Drama Does and How It Does It

Setting the Stage

Two of Aristophanes' earliest plays involve a comic hero who finds himself in serious trouble and needing the help of an expert in order to save himself from disaster. In *Acharnians*, produced at the Lenaea in 425 BC, Dicaeopolis is pursued by a chorus of irate fellow demesmen intent upon stoning him to death for having ratified a private peace treaty with the Lacedaemonians, the benefits of which only he and his family can enjoy. In *Clouds*, written for performance at the Dionysia two years later, Strepsiades faces imminent financial ruin, since his creditors are about to demand prompt repayment of his massive debts and are sure to take him to court when he defaults on his loans. Both characters urgently require the services of what we would today call a "lawyer," a trained professional who knows how to argue persuasively and, if necessary, deviously. It may come as a surprise, then, to modern audiences of these comedies that neither Strepsiades nor Dicaeopolis resorts to the ancient equivalent of a lawyer. The reason for this is that, in ancient Athens, there was nothing corresponding to the modern attorney at law. While litigants might have someone else prepare a speech for them to deliver, or could enlist supporters to deliver additional speeches on their behalf in court (Rubinstein 2000), citizens were expected to represent themselves either in a court of law or when speaking to a proposal in the Assembly. It is usually assumed, however, that there existed at this time professionals who claimed to be able to teach citizens how to speak effectively and persuasively in public, and one might expect either or both of Aristophanes' heroes to seek out one of these supposed experts in order to extricate himself from his pressing difficulties by learning the art of public speaking.

Instead, Strepsiades goes to see the philosopher Socrates and, perhaps more surprisingly, Dicaeopolis seeks out the tragic poet Euripides. On some level, it is easy enough to account for these choices. Socrates is the main object of Aristophanes' humor in *Clouds*, and he is notorious both for his conversational facility and for his willingness to espouse positions that most people would find difficult, if not impossible, to defend. Euripides is introduced into *Acharnians*

largely because Aristophanes wishes to present Dicaeopolis' defense in the form of an extended parody of that poet's *Telephus*, a play that Aristophanes is fond of ridiculing. Both Socrates and Euripides are Athenians and are therefore more appropriate targets for comic abuse than those teachers of public speaking who are assumed to have been in Athens in the 420s, since they had for the most part come to Athens from elsewhere in the Greek world. Still, it is striking that Aristophanes has constructed both plays in such a way that a desperate need for rhetorical skill serves as the springboard for the plot and that in neither play is that need satisfied by the introduction of a professional rhetorician. And it is even more striking that, in one of those plays, it is a tragic poet who is expected to supply the hero with the means to defend himself before an implacably hostile mob. In fact, Euripides turns out to be more effective in imparting skill in speaking than the brilliant and articulate philosopher Socrates.¹ For Dicaeopolis, "having downed a dose of Euripides" (*Acharnians* 484), is fully successful in defending himself and in persuading the Athenian people of the controversial proposition that peace is preferable to war (626–27). Strepsiades, on the other hand, while he is initially able to put his newly acquired skill to use in fending off his creditors, is shocked by the immorality of Socrates' teachings; the play ends with the pupil attempting to burn the teacher's "school," the Refectory, to the ground.

Aristophanic comedy, of course, is not an unbiased source of evidence for fifth-century life and thought, but the picture presented in these two plays, namely that one is likely to be better off learning public speaking from a tragic poet than from a philosopher or rhetorician, is supported by other available evidence. Indeed, it will be argued in what follows that the development of the art of rhetoric was directly inspired by the creation of the new, even revolutionary, genre of tragic drama, a creation that can be located in time and space in Athens in the late sixth century BC. This argument flies defiantly in the face of the standard view of the matter, according to which Greek tragedy in its earliest stages was innocent of rhetorical trappings, but later, under the influence of those who taught and theorized about public speaking, tragedy became increasingly rhetorical in the course of the fifth century. We should recognize, however, that, even if it is true that tragedy gradually changed in the direction of increased verbal sophistication, that may not necessarily be the result of contact with advanced rhetorical theory. Indeed, whether we can even speak of "advanced rhetorical theory" before the time of the death of Sophocles and Euripides has recently been called into question, most notably by Thomas Cole (1991a) and Edward Schiappa (1999, 2003: 39–54). Rather, it will be argued, the change in the character of verbal

expression in Greek tragedy represents a coherent development within the genre itself that, as we will see, recognized that it was in a unique position among poetic genres with regard to its relationship with the Muse and in the way it thought about its production. Tragic poets were not alone in acknowledging the special character of tragic drama; others, too, reflected on the skill with which poets like Aeschylus and, later, Sophocles and Euripides were able to construct persuasive speeches for delivery by others and to present two opposing sides of an argument in a manner that aroused fervid passions seemingly at will. Their appreciation of the effects created on stage by the early tragedians inspired these authors to adopt certain features of dramatic style and method to the composition of speeches for delivery by clients and pupils in assemblies and courts of law. Thus, it will be argued, formalized rhetoric in ancient Greece is, in effect, largely an outgrowth of Athenian tragic poetry.

A number of factors have combined to prevent this from being recognized previously. (I make a point of ignoring the factor that may be alleged as the only valid one, namely, the falsity of the hypothesis.) These factors, which it will be useful to discuss here briefly, include the pervasiveness of the standard view regarding the fifth-century development of rhetoric; the general reluctance to believe that “poets” (as opposed to “thinkers”) can be responsible for significant intellectual innovations; our very familiarity today with the drama, which leads us to take it so much for granted that we are disinclined to imagine that it can ever have been a revolutionary innovation; and, finally, the complicating factor of the transition from largely oral to increasingly literate culture, a transition that was taking place just at the time when the arts of tragedy and rhetoric were beginning to develop.

The standard view of the origins of formal rhetoric goes back at least to the time of Aristotle, according to whom the rhetorical art was invented by Sicilian Greeks in the first half of the fifth century BC, after which it was brought to Athens, where it flourished. Unfortunately, the evidence is neither secure nor even consistent. Aristotle appears to have given his account of the early history of rhetoric in more than one work, none of which survives.² Diogenes Laertius tells us that Aristotle, in his dialogue *The Sophist*, named Empedocles as the man who first invented rhetoric.³ Elsewhere, however, Aristotle appears to have attributed the invention to two other Sicilians. According to Cicero, Aristotle said, presumably in his *Synopsis of Rhetorical Manuals*, that after the Sicilian tyrants had been deposed and private citizens sought by judicial means to recover their property, Corax and Tisias laid down the rules of the art; before that, no one made it a practice to express himself methodically and

systematically.⁴ Cicero goes on to speak of Protagoras and Gorgias, both of whom are known to have spent time in Athens, and then of the Attic orators Antiphon, Lysias, and Isocrates. This sketch remained essentially unchanged well into the twentieth century, where it can be found in standard handbooks and histories.⁵ It was easy to combine this with the perception that the tragedies from the later fifth century are more “rhetorical” than those from earlier in the century, resulting in a tidy picture of Euripides as being more aware of rhetorical theory than his predecessors, a picture that seemed to find support in the (wholly unreliable) ancient biographical tradition, according to which Euripides was a pupil and associate of sophists and rhetoricians.⁶ So, for example, Michael Lloyd (1992: 20–21) reproduces this picture as background to his treatment of the *agon* in Euripides:

Rhetoric traditionally originated in Syracuse after the fall of the tyrants in 467 BC, where it was invented by Corax and Tisias. ... Corax and Tisias were credited by later authors with two inventions, the argument from probability and the formal organization of speeches. These two features are hallmarks of speeches influenced by the new rhetoric, and a further distinguishing feature is self-consciousness about the whole process of making a speech. It is this self-consciousness, as much as anything, which distinguishes Euripides’ more rhetorical speeches from speeches in Homer, Herodotus, and Sophocles.

In addition to illustrating the ubiquity of the standard view regarding the origin of rhetoric and its relationship to tragedy, this quotation betrays another widespread assumption that has stood in the way of recognizing the pioneering role that tragedians have played in the development of formal speech, namely, the reluctance to credit mere poets with intellectual inventiveness. We seem to be more comfortable with attributing the discovery of the argument from probability and the formal organization of speeches to two figures about whom virtually nothing is known⁷ than to a poet, and we are even willing (apparently) to deny to craftsmen of the stature of Homer and Sophocles a self-consciousness about the process of making a speech. Yet it is hard to imagine what Sophocles was thinking about when he composed Creon’s opening *rhexis* in *Antigone* if not “the whole process of making a speech.” Surely Sophocles no more needed the services of a rhetorical theoretician than M. Jourdain needed a professor of philosophy to teach him to use prose when he asked his maid to bring him his slippers. In any event, this view of the intellectual derivativeness of poets as a class is not shared by the ancient Greeks. In his *Protagoras*, for example, Plato represents the title character of the dialogue as claiming that Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides were sophists *avant la lettre*, using poetry to deflect

resentment in the same way that Orpheus and Musaeus (also poets) used prophecy and Iccus of Tarentum used athletic training.⁸ Of course, Protagoras' claim serves an apologetic purpose in Plato's dialogue and therefore need not be taken entirely seriously. But the making of such a claim is facilitated by the fact that early Greek literature is well supplied with strikingly original thinkers who expressed themselves in verse, poets like Xenophanes, Solon, Empedocles, and Parmenides, who show that labels like "poet," "philosopher," and "political reformer" are in no way mutually exclusive in the context of Archaic and Classical Greece. It is true that Aristotle denies to Empedocles the title of "poet," but he does so precisely and explicitly as a protest against the universal practice of his day (*Poetics* 1447b15–20).

It is not my intention to argue that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides deserve any label other than that of dramatist; rather, it is my contention that the drama, of which these poets' works are the earliest surviving examples, is in and of itself a radically new form of literary expression and that the sudden development of Attic tragedy in the late sixth century BC had as one of its effects the creation of the very "self-consciousness about the whole process of making a speech" that Michael Lloyd regards as a feature of "the new rhetoric." We are today, however, predisposed to reject out of hand the idea that drama is in any way revolutionary, in part because the drama is such a familiar element in our own lives that it is difficult to imagine an age in which it did not exist and in part because there are so many analogues and apparent ancestors to the drama, in very widespread religious rites and other rituals, that it sometimes seems as though there never was an age in which drama did not exist in some form or other.⁹ But just as it is necessary to distinguish formal rhetoric from the innate ability to speak convincingly that some people possess,¹⁰ so we must acknowledge a fundamental difference between the elaborately scripted *literary* productions of the Attic dramatists and traditional rites that may have involved masks, costumes, and other forms of impersonation but that existed solely for ritual purposes. For, whatever ritual origins Attic drama may have had, already in the time of Aeschylus Athenian dramatists saw themselves as working in a competitive literary tradition that included Homer and other epic and lyric poets rather than in a cultic context.¹¹ This is the way Aristotle¹² sees it and, while we need not agree with Aristotle's reconstruction of the origin of tragedy, his views regarding the way fourth- and fifth-century practitioners of the art perceived their role deserve our respect.

In fact, Aristotle's (and his mentor Plato's) treatment of tragedy as just another literary form is partially responsible for our difficulty in

perceiving the revolutionary character of drama. For Plato, all poetry is imitative, with tragedy and comedy being distinguished from other poetic forms merely by the degree of their mimetic character.¹³ Aristotle, too, notoriously claims that the visual aspect – what he calls *opsis*, or *mise-en-scène* – of tragedy is the most dispensable element of tragedy and that the potency of tragic poetry exists independently of actors and performance (*Poetics* 1450b16–19). This statement has, understandably, proved enormously controversial, and recently Gregory Scott has sought to show that what Aristotle really means is that the essence of tragedy can be conveyed, not only in full-scale productions like those in which fifth-century dramas were normally staged, but “also ... in private performance, or in rehearsal, or in minor public performance” (Scott 1999: 34, with original emphasis). This is clearly a desperate device, necessitated by Scott’s insistence upon distinguishing between what he terms “literary art” and “performance art” (and in any case the distinction is not rigorously adhered to, since rehearsal is no more the one art than the other). For the Greeks of the fifth century BC there was no such distinction, since everything that we would call “literature” was composed for performance, notwithstanding the fact that it could also be experienced in written form. Even Herodotus’ *Histories* and many fifth-century technical treatises dealing with such prosaic matters as philosophy and medicine were written in the expectation that at least portions of the works would be experienced by audiences in public, oral performance.¹⁴ Still, Scott is right to insist that *opsis* is, for Aristotle, an essential property of tragedy – one of the elements, in fact, that Aristotle uses to distinguish tragedy from epic. How, then, is it possible to understand Aristotle’s claim that the visual aspect of tragedy, although it forms part of the very essence of tragedy, can be dispensed with and that the efficacy (*dynamis*) of tragedy can abide even in its absence?

Light can be shed on this question as a result of an encounter that I once had with an acquaintance of mine – a classicist, as it happens – who is an organist and an authority on the music of Olivier Messiaen. In conversation he told me that the best, indeed the only true, means of experiencing Messiaen’s music is by reading the score. This struck me as bizarre, even absurd. It seemed (and still seems) to me that the sensuous sonorities and vibrant colors of, say, the *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité* are as essential an element of Messiaen’s music as are the mysticism and spirituality, indeed, that the latter are indissolubly linked to the former and, further, that the sonorities and the colors could in no way be detached from the auditory sensation or even from the tactile experience of the vibration caused by the sound waves. But it occurred to me that I was in no position to dispute my

acquaintance's claim since, unlike him, I am musically only semiliterate at best and so am not capable of "hearing" the music from seeing it printed on the page. And, as the cases of late Beethoven and Smetana show, even total deafness is no bar to the appreciation or the masterful creation of music. If we apply this observation to what Aristotle says about tragedy we can, I think, make sense of his claim that *opsis* is both fundamental to tragedy and inessential in practice. Just as I can read the texts of tragic dramas and epic poems and successfully extract from those texts what differentiates the two genres, so a musically literate person like my acquaintance can read the scores of, say, both operas and solo instrumental music and, on that basis, recognize that among the essential elements that distinguish the former from the latter are a verbal text, vocal impersonation, dramatic action, movement on a stage, and so forth. In fact, even a musically illiterate person can presumably make those discriminations without ever having seen an opera, but merely from having heard radio broadcasts or recordings. Listening to a recording of *Tristan* can create a profound musical experience, even though that experience lacks several of the effects that Wagner took great care to create, effects that he intended his audiences to experience in the theater. But just as the listener can mentally supply those effects – all the more easily in the case of Wagner, whose music goes a long way toward creating those effects unaided – so the musically literate reader of the score can mentally supply the sounds as well, emancipating himself or herself from the sloppy intonation of this orchestra's violin section, the faulty diction of that tenor, or the outrageous innovations of any number of directors and set designers.

We speak of musical "literacy" because the activity of "reading" a score is analogous to that of reading the words on this page or screen. The musical notes, like the letters of the alphabet, are arbitrary graphic signs that in effect instruct the reader to produce specific sounds. But some people have not, or have not yet, learned to read the script that represents the language that they speak and are therefore incapable of carrying out those instructions. Others are at a rudimentary level of literacy and can carry out those instructions only by sounding out the written characters slowly and hesitantly. Still others are so comfortable and so experienced as readers that they can understand very rapidly what is printed on the page or displayed on the screen without even bothering to make audible the sounds that the symbols represent. The readers of this book fall into this last category. But not all are comparably proficient in the reading of music. Some, perhaps many, are, like me, only capable of painfully picking out a few notes on a keyboard; some may not even read music at all. This is precisely analogous to the situation that obtained in fifth- and fourth-

century Athens, where the majority of adults were illiterate and many of those who were literate could read only slowly and with difficulty.¹⁵ But that did not prevent the majority from experiencing or appreciating what we misleadingly call “literature.” All could attend performances by rhapsodes, who recited and interpreted for their audiences the works of Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, and other poets (Plato, *Ion* 530c–31a); all could hear public displays by sophists (Plato, *Hippias minor* 363c–d); and all could go to the theater to watch productions of dithyrambs, tragedies, and comedies (Plato, *Symposium* 175e). Not all, however, could read the written texts or would have the resources that would enable them to have access to those texts.

The earliest reference we have to someone reading the text of a dramatic work is a special, and very interesting, case (Kovacs 2005: 379–80). It comes from the very end of the fifth century, in a passage from Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, produced in 405 BC. The reader is no ordinary member of the dramatist’s audience, but is none other than Dionysus, the very god in whose honor dramatic competitions were held. Dionysus relates to Heracles (48–53) that, while he was serving on shipboard as a hoplite soldier, he was reading to himself the text of Euripides’ *Andromeda*. As Leonard Woodbury (1976) has shown, part of the point of this imaginary tableau is to create humor out of the incongruity of the situation: The love story that Euripides’ romantic play dramatizes serves as unexpected reading material for a (supposedly) tough-minded warrior, who ought in any event not to have room in his kit for an unwieldy papyrus scroll. Woodbury is right to argue that this scene does not provide evidence for the widespread reading of tragic texts in late fifth-century Athens. What Woodbury does not stress is the significance of the fact that, at the time at which Aristophanes’ play was produced, Euripides was no longer alive. Indeed, it is the experience of reading the text of *Andromeda* that provokes Dionysus’ passionate longing for the deceased playwright, which, in turn, inspires the god to journey to the underworld to bring Euripides back to life in Athens. In other words, there are two exceptional circumstances that make it necessary for Dionysus to engage in reading if he is to enjoy the experience of a play: He is on board a ship, and therefore unable to attend performances in the theater, and his favorite playwright has recently died. The death of Euripides, of course, is a given; the posting of Dionysus to shipboard service, however, is a creation of the comic poet. We may well be justified in seeing this as evidence that reading a play in the late fifth century was an unusual occurrence, one that arose only under extreme conditions. A devotee of the theater who found himself on a military campaign would naturally be compelled to resort to reading. And when it came to the work of a deceased dramatist, there was no

guarantee that it would appear on the Attic stage again, so that, in 405 BC, Aristophanes and his audience might well expect that, unless Euripides were restored to life, the only way to experience a Euripidean drama in Athens would be in written form. It is possible, as Pat Easterling (1994) has suggested, that the tragedies of Euripides were performed outside Athens as well as in the Theater of Dionysus during the playwright's lifetime, and we have a good deal of evidence for the reperformance of Euripidean drama both inside and outside Athens beginning at least by the middle of the fourth century BC (Revermann 1999–2000). But at the time of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, shortly after the death of Euripides, no one in Athens could have been confident that his plays would be accorded the posthumous honor said to have been granted in the fifth century to those of Aeschylus, namely, the right of reperformance at the Dionysia.¹⁶

We should, then, as suggested in this chapter, think of the reading of tragedy in Classical Athens as analogous to the reading of music today. While almost everyone now listens to music and has strong preferences among performers and types of music, very few derive their musical experience directly from the printed score (Cole 1986: 186). Likewise, in fifth- and fourth-century Greece, the experience of drama was predominantly in the theater, with only a minority who could, or would have occasion to, read the texts. Typical, apparently, of that minority are Aristophanes' Dionysus, the archetypal enthusiast for the dramatic art, and the philosopher Aristotle, whose interest in tragedy was academic as well as personal, in the sense that his analytical examination of the tragic genre in the *Poetics* required him to be familiar with the texts of plays that were very likely no longer in the active repertoire. Aristotle's studies impressed upon him the importance of the visual aspect of the theater, but the very nature of that study, carried out in large part by reading texts and therefore neglecting the visual impact of dramatic performance, created what appears to be a certain ambivalence in his attitude toward *opsis*. Martin Revermann (2006a: 106–7) has recently explained this ambivalence in terms of “strategies of social and intellectual differentiation”:¹⁷

Denigrating “viewing” (ὄψις) as the allegedly easy access to theatre in order to highlight other, conceivably more sophisticated skill-sets (some of which may involve literacy or at least be significantly enhanced by continued education and exposure to high culture) serves as a vehicle for making the medium of mass entertainment in Greek culture amenable to layers of connoisseurship which reiterate social and educational differences of society-at-large. In other words, once the mass-commodity “theatre” is dissected to allow for different levels of

cultural consumption, it becomes a subject worthy of being appreciated by “the few,” to deploy Aristotle’s terminology. In this model the visual dimension must become the most dispensable because it is shared by most and, on a superficial level, allows for least differentiation. What is remarkable, in other words, are the cultural politics which underlie Aristotle’s low esteem of “viewing.” Its denigration is part of an attempt to redefine a cultural commodity so that it becomes, or rather remains, suitable for aristocratic perusal at a time when its very exclusivity is increasingly challenged by mass consumption in large venues featuring highly mobile theatre practitioners who perform in front of big and diverse audiences.

Revermann is concerned here solely with the *Poetics*; had he taken into account what Aristotle has to say in the opening sections (1.3–7) of Book 3 of his *Rhetoric*, he would have been able to point to a comparable prejudice – a word Revermann is too tactful to employ – in the case of delivery, *hypokrisis*, something that appeals to the taste of the lower class (φορτικόν, 1403b36). From the frequent references to poetry in this passage, it is clear that Aristotle sees no fundamental difference between delivery as it relates to dramatic acting and as it relates to oratory (Sifakis 2002: 155–56). According to Aristotle, delivery, whether on the stage, in the courtroom, or in the Assembly, is a necessary evil, distantly subordinate to the true substance of the speech or the drama. Still, attention needs to be paid to the way speeches are delivered, because delivery “can have a great effect, owing to the depravity of the audience” (διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ μοχθηρίαν, 1404a7–8). This depravity, according to Aristotle, has come about over the course of time, presumably as a result of the development of democratic government in Athens (Kennedy 1991: 218 n. 6). And, just as tragic actors have become bigger “stars” in the dramatic competitions than the playwrights in whose tragedies they perform, so in these degenerate times the orators who pay close attention to delivery tend to have greater success in the political arena, “owing to the corrupt state of politics” (διὰ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τῶν πολιτειῶν, 1403b34–35; Lossau 1971). Implicit in Aristotle’s denigration of delivery is a suspicion of the cheap emotional power that it possesses, in contrast to the cool analysis that ought to be applied to the evaluation of arguments, an analysis that can be applied as well to words on a page as to a voice ringing in the ears, or even better. Similarly, for Aristotle, one can appreciate what most needs appreciation in the art of Sophocles just as well by reading the written text of *Oedipus*, without the distracting histrionics of the actors or the annoyance of a less than perfectly synchronized chorus.

In ancient Greece, then, the experience of watching a play in the

theater was available to the many, while only the few (including Aristotle and the god Dionysus) possessed the means to experience a play in written form. Similarly, today the masses listen to music, both in live performance and through a variety of electronic means, while only the few (including my acquaintance) can experience music by reading a score. Indeed, in the case of popular music, many of the performers are no more musically literate than I am. I find it chastening to acknowledge that, when it comes to music, I am in the category of “the masses” while my acquaintance is among “the few.” It is in fact conceivable that his observation to me regarding the true manner of appreciating the music of Messiaen was prompted by a strategy – in this case, successful – of social and intellectual differentiation. When it comes to drama, however, the situation has changed considerably from the time of Aristotle. As Revermann points out, because of the limitations of literacy in antiquity, reading a play was confined to the social and intellectual elite while attending the theater was open to all. Now, however, in a time of very widespread literacy, it is just as easy to read the text of a play as to see it performed on stage. Indeed, depending upon where one lives, it may be quite impossible to experience, say, *Cymbeline* or *Rosmersholm* or *Le Cid* in live performance, although inexpensive texts of all three are readily available in paperback editions and, in fact, all are now accessible free of charge by way of the internet. While it is not true to say that attendance in the theater is today an exclusively elite activity, it is certainly the case that reading is so widespread that it is nearly universal in those societies that have an active theatrical tradition. And this is one of the reasons, as mentioned in this chapter, that it is difficult for us to appreciate the truly revolutionary character of the drama. For the very same publishers and internet servers that supply us with texts of Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Corneille also provide us with access, in precisely the same format, to *Moby Dick*, *Four Quartets*, and *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. That is to say, our frequent habit of reading plays, in the same way we read novels, poems, and works of nonfiction, has the effect of reducing all of them to the same status, that of “texts.” Rush Rehm (2002: 8–9) has pointed out that literacy is so commonplace that we now speak of “reading” such things as facial expressions and archaeological evidence. And Alberto Manguel (1996: 6–7) considers “reading letters on a page” to be merely a specialized, and relatively recently developed, variant of “reading.” As a result, we are no longer as alarmed as we ought to be by titles such as *Sophocles: A Reading* by George Gellie, *Shakespeare’s Mortal Knowledge: A Reading of the Tragedies* by Zulfikar Ghose, and *Reading Shakespeare in Performance: King Lear* by James P. Lusardi and June Schlueter. John Miles Foley, on the other hand, is fully and

commendably aware of the paradoxical character of the title of his *How to Read an Oral Poem*. As far as drama is concerned, a useful corrective is provided by Dennis Kennedy's *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*. Plays are created for performance, not for reading, or for "reading."

Now, it is true that, in ancient Greece, plays, epic poems, and sophistic display pieces were all created for, and experienced in, live performance, and it might be objected that, just as reading reduces all of them for us to the same type of experience, so live performance did the same for the ancient Greeks. This objection will be addressed in this book; for now I just want to emphasize the fact that, while today we take for granted the reading of plays, such was not the case during the lifetime of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and that, further, our familiarity with the works of those dramatists in written form poses an obstacle to our appreciation of the fundamental difference between the performance of a play and that of an epic poem. Indeed, it is the very fact of literacy and the existence of written texts of Attic drama that made it possible for Aristotle to make his claim in the first place about the dispensability of *opsis*. In recent years there has been great scholarly interest in the transition from oral to literate culture in ancient Greece; our understanding of that transition has had interesting implications for the way in which we think about "works of literature," and it will be relevant to discuss one of those implications here. The recognition that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* derive from a tradition of orally composed poems, in which the acts of performance and composition cannot be disentangled, has generated a tendency to think in binary terms of "oral" and "written," with the former being fluid and fleeting, and the latter fixed. This is, of course, an oversimplification, and scholars generally understand that, while a purely "oral" culture can exist, there can be no such thing as a society that has entirely abandoned "orality," and that when dealing with a society that is in a period of transition, like that of Classical Greece, one must be especially careful to avoid thinking in black-or-white terms. Accordingly, some scholars have argued that even the texts of Homer's epics continued in a state of flux throughout the Classical Period, the most prominent and persistent proponent of this view being Gregory Nagy, who has expressed himself in a series of publications, most recently in 2003 and 2004. And Rosalind Thomas (1992: 48) has even questioned the existence in the fifth and fourth centuries of "the concept of fixed, absolutely verbatim accuracy." Hayden Pelliccia (2003), however, has shown convincingly that, indeed, the notion of verbatim accuracy must have existed in the fifth century BC. He shows this by using precisely the evidence provided by the performances of dramatic and dithyrambic choruses, which can

only have taken place on the basis of a fixed text available to all the performers, whether that “text” existed in written form or not. Each dithyrambic chorus consisted of 50 men or boys, and they sang intricate rhythmical texts while accompanying themselves with elaborate dance steps, which can only have been accomplished successfully if all of them had memorized and rehearsed the same text and the same music. And in the case of dramatic productions, again, it was necessary for all the performers, actors and chorus members alike, to know not only their own lines but also their entrance cues and other prompts, requiring them to know at least some of the other performers’ lines as well. This was particularly necessary in the case of such rapid forms of exchange as stichomythia and antiphonal lament, techniques that can be seen already fully developed in the earliest surviving tragedy, Aeschylus’ *Persians* (232–45, 715–38, 1002–76).

Whatever view we take, then, of the stability of the Homeric text in the fifth century, we must acknowledge that the “text” (whatever that may mean) of Aeschylus’ *Persians* was fixed in the second week of the Attic month of Elaphebolion, 472 BC. But apart even from the question of whether or not that text existed in written form, we are entitled to ask about the relationship between that “text” and the text printed in Martin West’s Teubner edition (1990a). And, more importantly, what is the relationship between that “text” and Aeschylus’ *Persians*? In other words, when we speak of Aeschylus’ *Persians* (or of any play, for that matter, ancient or recent), what exactly are we talking about? This is a serious and problematic question, one that is not often enough raised in connection with Greek tragedy but is of constant concern to, say, scholars of Shakespeare and early modern theater.¹⁸ *King Lear* is perhaps an extreme case, but it well represents the point at issue. Is *King Lear* to be identified with the first known performance of that play at Whitehall on St. Stephen’s Day in 1606? Or with the Royal Shakespeare Company’s most recent production and, if so, with Monday’s performance or Thursday’s? Or with any one of the countless performances that have been seen in the past 400 years? Or, rather, is *King Lear* identical with the quarto text of 1608 (or that of 1619), which may be based on Shakespeare’s foul papers or may represent a memorial reconstruction, or with the Folio text of 1623, which may or may not derive in part from the deceased playwright’s fair copy of the play? The magnitude of the problem is illustrated by the decision of Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor to print separately “both authoritative early editions,” namely, the quarto and the Folio texts, in the second edition of their *William Shakespeare: Complete Works* (2005). Again, the parallel with music reveals that problems like this are not confined to literary matters.¹⁹ What exactly are we referring to when we speak of Beethoven’s opus 134? Are we

speaking of a particular sonic realization of that work and, if so, which particular realization? Or are we rather referring to the score of that work, which some but not all music lovers can realize for themselves by merely looking at the notes on the page? And, if that is the case, which score do we have in mind? The original Vienna publication of 1827? Or the edition of the score that appears in Willy Hess' *Supplemente zur Gesamtausgabe*? Or the text of the score in the Munich *Neue Ausgabe*? Or Beethoven's recently discovered autograph score of the work? Or, finally, is the only true form of Beethoven's opus 134 that which the composer "heard" in his head when he was creating it?

Interestingly, what Aeschylus' *Persians*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and Beethoven's piano four-hand version of the "Grosse Fuge" have in common, and what creates all the problems that we have with them, is precisely the existence of written texts. So far from a written text of a performance piece "fixing" that work and preserving an authoritative version of it so that "the same" work can be recreated again and again, the introduction of writing complicates and destabilizes the very way we think about the nature of musical and verbal performance. For in the days before the invention of writing, it would not have occurred to a member of the audience at such a performance that there was anything to the performance other than the direct experience of seeing and hearing the performer in action. But once a transcript has been made possible, whether the transcript is produced by the performer beforehand or by a member of the audience either during or after the performance, the notion arises of the "work of art" as something other than, and existing independently of, the act of performance that occurred at a particular time and place. This has the advantage of enabling a more analytic approach to works of verbal and musical expression, of the sort that we begin to see in the writings of the fifth-century sophists and the fourth-century philosophers Plato and Aristotle.²⁰ On the other hand, the disadvantage arises of the potentially confusing existence of competing oral and written versions of what may now be thought of as "the same" work. In fact, there can now be multiple written *and* multiple oral exemplars of "the same" work, because a written text can be copied over and over – with errors introduced at every stage, if it is a matter of writing out by hand each copy, as was the case in ancient Greece – and an author or someone else can give multiple performances based upon "the same" written text (Sansone 2004: 138–40). And, once the notion arises of an independently existing "work of art," individual instantiations of which are regarded as more or less successful representatives of that work, it becomes possible to compare and criticize different versions, from the point of view of

determining to what degree they fall short of the notional ideal. Curiously, there seems to be no evidence that this was done before the Hellenistic Period, and even then the evidence pertains only to the collation of written texts.²¹

Thus, the relatively widespread use of writing for the preservation and transmission of works of literature in fifth- and fourth-century Greece complicates the issues that we will be dealing with. It also has the unfortunate effect of reducing all works of literature – drama and narrative poems alike – to texts that can be read, in addition to being works that can, and ideally should, be experienced in live performance. In this way, even in the earliest days of drama's existence, at the very time when the drama's revolutionary character was most apparent, literacy was beginning to sow the seeds of the tendency, which germinated already in the writings of Plato and Aristotle and is now in full flower, to regard drama as merely another literary form, differing from epic and choral lyric in only relatively superficial ways (Veltruský 1977). This accounts for the fact that Plato can on occasion refer to Homer as a representative tragic poet, and even as the “number one tragedian.”²² It should not be thought, however, that Plato, Aristotle, or any of their contemporaries experienced tragedies or epic poems primarily in written form. Greece was still a predominantly oral society²³ and, even if the opportunity existed to read tragedies and other poetic works, the creators of those works, in contrast to creators of prose texts, were not thought of as “writers” (Bing 1988: 12). We have seen that Aristophanes in *The Frogs* portrays the god Dionysus as reading a text of a play by the deceased Euripides. Dionysus is suddenly overcome by a desire to restore Euripides to life so that, as we might say, the tragic poet could *write* more plays. But no one in the play speaks of Euripides (or Aeschylus) as writing. Instead, the language used consistently is that of “making,” as is generally the case when referring to the creation of poetry in the fifth century (Dover 1997: 183–84; Ford 2002: 131–57; Olson 2007: 84). So, when Aeschylus is asked how he taught men to be courageous, he replies, “By creating a play (δράμα ποιήσας) packed with Ares” (*Frogs* 1021). And when it is the turn of Euripides to be interrogated, Dionysus asks him not, “How did you write your prologues?” but “How did you compose (εποίηεις, 1177) them?” Later, the chorus refers to Aeschylus as “the man who composed (ποίησαντι, 1255) the finest lyrics.” By contrast, there is reference to writing only once in the play, not in connection with someone creating a work of poetic literature but with “someone who has had a copy made (ἐξεγράψατο, 151; cf. *Birds* 982) of a set piece” by the second-rate tragic poet Morsimus. Forms of this same verb (γράφω) do appear elsewhere in *Frogs*, but not with the meaning “write.” At 537, for

example, it is used to refer to a picture, either “painted” or “drawn.”²⁴

A particularly interesting illustration of ancient versus modern ways of thinking about the nature of poetic and dramatic composition can be found in Jeffrey Henderson’s translation of *Frogs* (2002), lines 933–38. Following Dionysus’ complaint that he had lost sleep wondering what kind of bird Aeschylus’ “horsecock” was, we find this exchange:

AESCH: It was carved on the ships as a figurehead, you ignoramus!...

EUR: But really, should one write about a *rooster* in tragedy?

AESCH: And what about you, you enemy of the gods, what sort of things did you write about?

EUR: Certainly not horsecocks or goatstags, like you, the sort of things they embroider on Persian tapestries.

What is of interest is that Henderson’s rendering twice uses “write” to translate the word for “make” (ποιῆσαι 935, ἐποίεις 936). Meanwhile, his translations “carved” and “embroider” in each case represent forms of the verb γράφω (ἐνεγέγραπτο 933, γράφουσιν 938), a word that can mean “write” but can also be used to refer to the creation of pictorial images. When it is used in reference to writing, it is generally used in connection with types of writing other than the writing that may, but need not, be involved in poetic composition. So, for example, elsewhere in Aristophanes γράφω is used to refer to the writing of graffiti (*Acharnians* 144), to the recording of criminal charges by the court secretary (*Clouds* 770), and to the posting of entries in an account book (*Wasps* 961).

Writing, in other words, was felt in the fifth century to be appropriate to what we think of as more prosaic pursuits. Indeed, authors of prose works routinely refer to themselves as “writing.” Gorgias concludes his *Encomium of Helen*, presumably composed in the fifth century, by saying (21), “I wished to write (γράψαι) my speech to serve as Helen’s encomium and as my own *jeu d’esprit*.” Herodotus often speaks of himself as “writing” the work in which we read his words. He tells us that, although he knows three other ways that the story of Cyrus has been told, he will set down in writing (γράψω, 1.95.1) the account given by those of the Persians who are interested in telling the truth. Of the many various methods used by the Egyptians to catch crocodiles, the one that Herodotus records (γράψω, 2.70.1) is, not surprisingly, the one that he considers to be the one most worthy of recounting. And, in general, Herodotus regards it as his task to preserve in writing (γράψω, 2.123.1) what he has heard

from his various sources.²⁵ His younger contemporary Thucydides is even more insistent upon his role as “writer,” making the verb for writing the first word of his *History* after only his own name and, later, contrasting his own immortal work with some performance intended to be heard (ἀκούειν, 1.22.4) in the moment. Both Herodotus and Thucydides are following in the footsteps of Hecataeus, whose early genealogical work had begun with the words, “Hecataeus of Miletus announces the following: I write (γράφω) these things as they seem to me to be true” (frag. 1 Nenci). This is in striking contrast to the way in which poets, and specifically dramatic poets, are spoken of in connection with their creation of what we would call “texts.”²⁶ As Herington (1985: 46–47) notes, there are only two places in the literature that predates the fourth century BC in which the process of composing poetry is described: Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* (393–479) and *Thesmophoriazusae* (28–265). Both are lengthy scenes involving tragic poets (Euripides and Agathon) at work, but in neither case does that work include anything having to do with writing. Clearly at some point the words of Euripides and Agathon (and Aristophanes) had to be committed to writing, since the plays of those dramatists survived in written form for some time after their initial performances, but writing seems to have been felt as secondary to the creative process of composing dramas, just as reading was, and is, secondary to the audience’s process of experiencing a play.

Appropriately, we still refer to dramatists in English as “playwrights,” speaking of them in terms of their crafting of theatrical experiences rather than as writers of scripts. At least, those of us who know how to spell refer to dramatists as “playwrights.” As it happens, the spelling “playwrite” can be found disseminated thousands of times on the World Wide Web, including on several sites from which undergraduate term papers are regularly plagiarized (which accounts for my knowledge of the fact). This very common misspelling underlines the point made in this chapter, that we are today predisposed to envision the activity of dramatists as essentially undistinguishable from that of novelists and essayists, identifying them all equally as “writers.” This predisposition serves as an obstacle to our recognition of the fundamental distinction that Greeks of the fifth century drew between composers of dramatic and other types of verse on the one hand and writers of prose on the other. The fact that, today, poets, playwrights, and novelists are all trained in the United States in university programs in “creative writing” makes it difficult for us to appreciate the degree of difference that the ancient Greeks recognized as existing among the various branches of what we, because of the ubiquity of written texts, refer to as “literature,” works produced literally by what used to be called “men of letters.”

Consequently, we are content to ignore the radical departure that the invention of the drama represents, and we are willing to believe, on the authority of Aristotle and others, that the earliest dramatists needed to learn from the earliest rhetorical theorists how to put persuasive words into the mouths of their characters. It is hoped that these predispositions can be successfully overcome and that the following chapters will show that, on the contrary, it was the revolutionary innovation represented by the development of the drama that inspired the creation of rhetorical theory.

1 As Austin and Olson (2004: lvii) note, Dicaeopolis chooses to play Telephus “because he thinks of the tragic hero as a master of rhetoric (esp. *Ach.* 428–9).” Later, the sophist Thrasymachus will pay tribute to the rhetoric of Euripides’ *Telephus* by adapting a line from that play for his speech on behalf of the citizens of Larissa (frag. 2 Diels–Kranz = Euripides frag. 719 Kannicht).

2 Of course, even if we were fortunate enough to have the whole of Aristotle’s account of the birth of rhetoric, as we have some of his statements regarding the birth of tragedy in the *Poetics* and in the fragments of *On Poets*, there is no guarantee that it would be either authoritative or coherent. For a brave attempt to reconcile Aristotle’s various pronouncements on the origin of tragedy, see Janko (2011: 363–71).

3 Diogenes Laertius 8.57 = Aristotle frag. 65 Rose = Radermacher 1951: B.I.1 (πρῶτον ἔμπεδοκλέα ῥητορικὴν εὐρεῖν); similarly, Quintilian 3.1.8; Diogenes Laertius 9.25; and Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 7.6.

4 Cicero, *Brutus* 46 = Aristotle frag. 137 Rose = Radermacher 1951: A.V.9 (“antea neminem solitum via nec arte ... dicere”).

5 For example, Schmid and Stählin (1929–1948, vol. 3: 90–94), Hadas (1950: 160), J. Martin (1974: 1–8), Fuhrmann (1984: 16–24), and Kennedy (1963: 52–70). In his more recent work, Kennedy acknowledges the challenges to the standard view (1994: 33–35, 1997: 7, 1999: 21–22).

6 For the ancient testimonia, see Kovacs (1994: 32–37); for the negligible value of this evidence, see Lefkowitz (1981: 88–104).

7 Cole (1991b) even suggests – plausibly, in my view – that

“Corax,” which is the Greek word for “raven,” is nothing other than a nickname for Tisias.

8 *Protagoras* 316d–e; on this passage, see Schwinge (1997: 17–18).

9 For examples from the extensive ethnographic literature, see Ridgeway (1910, 1915) and Kakouri (1974).

10 See, for example, Cole (1991a: 15).

11 See, for example, Solmsen (1949), Jouan (1966), Sideras (1971), Herington (1985), J.F. Davidson (1989, 1995, 1999–2000), Garner (1990), M.J. Anderson (1997), Bagordo (2003), and Libran Moreno (2005: 25–64). In Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, Aeschylus portrays himself as belonging in the tradition of Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer (1030–36).

12 *Poetics* 1448b34–49a6 with Else (1957: 144–49).

13 *Republic* 373b–c, 392d–98b, and 595a–602c (esp. 600e4–6: All creative artists are “imitators of images”); and *Laws* 816d–17e. A selection of recent studies of mimesis in Plato would include Janaway (1995: 106–57), Halliwell (2002: 37–71), and Naddaff (2002: 83–91).

14 See Thomas (2000: 249–69). Even Johnson, who is skeptical, says (1994: 253), “I do not deny the possibility that Herodotus read parts of his work orally. Nor should this possibility be denied for Thucydides or Xenophon.”

15 Havelock (1982: 262–63) and Harris (1989: 65–115).

16 Dover (1993: 23). Biles (2006–2007), however, casts serious doubt on the evidence for a decree providing for the restaging of Aeschylus’ plays at the Dionysia in the fifth century.

17 Cf. Steiner (1994: 7): “If speech is the hallmark of the democratic city, then writing is associated with those out of sympathy with its radical politics.”

18 I am not referring to the narrowly textual question, with which classicists have regularly, and in some cases exclusively, preoccupied themselves; see Gurd (2005).

19 Adorno (1967, esp. 142–46).

20 See Ford (2002, esp. 152–57).

21 And even this has been questioned by Martin West (2001: 36).

22 Plato, *Theaetetus* 152e; and *Republic* 595b–c, 598d, 605c, 607a; see Herington (1985: 213–15) for references to passages in other ancient authors (including “Aristotle, *Poetics*, passim”) who share Plato’s view.

23 Havelock (1963), G.E.R. Lloyd (1979: 239–40), Harris (1989: 125–26), and Thomas (1992).

24 For a detailed lexicographical account of the word, see Chadwick (1996: 79–87).

25 See also 2.123.3, 4.195.2, and 6.53.1, with Rösler (2002).

26 Democritus frag. 18 Diels–Kranz seems to be the only text that may belong to the fifth century in which reference is made to poets writing. For this reason we should be suspicious of attempts, like those of Slater (1996: 102) and Torrance (2010), to see writing as a living metaphor for plot construction in Aristophanes and Euripides.

Seeing Is Believing

We have seen, then, that the vocabulary used by the ancient Greeks indicates that they recognized a fundamental distinction between poets on the one hand and writers of prose on the other. We did not make an attempt to account for this distinction, but it may not be difficult to suggest reasons why the Greeks spoke (and thought) as they did. To begin with, poetry is a traditional art of very long standing whose origins antedate by many centuries the invention of writing. By contrast, the prose genres owe their very existence to the advent of literacy. It is, therefore, not surprising that poets continued to be spoken of in the terms that had been applied to them from time immemorial, as “bards” (ᾄδοι) whose creations are “songs” (ὥδαι), while historians and sophists are referred to using the vocabulary of the new technology that gave rise to their professions. It is true that, even in the fifth century BC, as Andrew Ford (2002: 132–39) has shown, the vocabulary of “singing” for poetic composition was in the process of being replaced by the vocabulary of “making” (ποιεῖν) and the bard was increasingly being called a “poet” (ποιητής). But the distinction between “writers” of prose and “creators” or “singers” of verse was maintained, in part because of the historical circumstance that prose genres were first created in a literate age.

There is, however, a more important reason for the distinction in terminology between poets and writers of prose. Again, it is easy for us to lose sight of this distinction because, to us, poetry and prose are merely different varieties of words on the page. To the fifth-century Greeks, however, for all that physicians and philosophers may have given public presentations of their works, the works of these authors consisted of nothing more than *logoi*, that is, words, arguments, or accounts. Alphabetic script, even in the days before the regular adoption of such refinements as word division, punctuation, and diacritical marks, was perfectly adequate for the task of consistently and faithfully representing sequences of *logoi*. Poetry, however, was (and is) much more than merely a sequence of words. Poetic performance in ancient Greece, whether sung or recited, was

accompanied by music, and part of its effect was accomplished by such musical means as melody, rhythm, and tempo. Scholars are not in agreement as to the date by which musical notation was first developed by the ancient Greeks. But the system of notation used by the Greeks is, after all, derived from the alphabetic script invented to record spoken language (West 1992: 254–63), and the earliest time at which it can reasonably be said to have originated is some time in the fifth century BC (Hagel 2010: 443; Prauscello 2006: 40 n. 120). In any event, as Pöhlmann and West (2001: 1) say, ancient Greek musical notation “was not highly regarded in antiquity.” After all, it is possible to represent graphically anything spoken in the Greek language using a mere two dozen symbols – that is the great virtue of the invention of alphabetic script – whereas music is much less easily reduced to a uniform set of graphic signs.

There was good reason, therefore, for the Greeks to speak of the works of annalists and scientists as the products of “writers” and poems as the products of “singers.” But not all poetic works were spoken of using the same terms and, as we will see, there is a particular significance to that as well. Just as poetry is more than mere words, so dramatic poetry is more than what one can hear. To a degree that no other form of poetry can match, drama adds to the verbal and musical – that is, the purely auditory – components a visual aspect that sets it apart from all other literary genres. And, Aristotle’s professed disdain for *opsis* notwithstanding, it is visual terminology that we find consistently used in the fifth century in connection with experiencing a dramatic performance. Indeed, it is by using visual terminology that Aristotle himself distinguishes the dramatic experience. In chapter 14 of the *Poetics*, for example, Aristotle says,

Now it is possible for the fearful and pathetic effect to come from the costuming; but it is also possible for it to come from the structure of events itself, which is theoretically prior and the mark of a better poet. For even without seeing the play (ἄνευ τοῦ ὁρᾶν), the plot should be so constructed that anyone who hears the events as they unfold (τὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πρὶν γινόμενα) will both shudder and be moved to pity at the outcome: which is what one would feel at hearing (ἀκούων) the plot of the *Oedipus*.¹

Just as we “watch” a television program or “see” something on the TV news, thus marking out the distinctive feature of the medium that added a visual component to the radio that we “listen” to, so the Greeks from the very start referred to the dramatic experience in visual terms, despite the seeming oddity of “watching” a work of poetry. The audience for dramatic performances is said to consist of

“spectators” seated in “viewing stands.”² When Herodotus describes the Athenian audience’s reaction to the production of Phrynichus’ *Fall of Miletus* shortly after 494 BC, he refers to the spectators as τὸ θέητρον, in much the way we would speak of “the house” being brought to tears by the dramatic experience (Olson 2007: 110). Most of the earliest surviving evidence for this terminology comes from comedy, as that genre, unlike tragedy, allows itself to refer directly to the audience and to the circumstances of performance. And that evidence is both abundant and consistent. The word “spectator” (θεατής), for example, appears some two dozen times in Aristophanes and, interestingly, it is used even in contexts in which the visual aspect is of no consequence. There is a convention whereby a character asks himself or another character whether he should reveal something to the audience in words. So, near the start of *Wasps*, the slave Xanthias wonders aloud whether he should tell the spectators (κατεῖπω τοῖς θεαταῖς, 54) the premise of the play they are about to watch. Similarly, Aristophanes starts the plot of *Knights* moving by having one slave ask another if he should inform the audience (τοῖς θεαταῖσιν φράσω, 36) of the situation. And in *Peace* it is the chorus, or the chorus leader, who introduces the parabasis by saying, “Let us explain to the spectators (τοῖσι θεαταῖς ... εἴπωμεν, 732–33) what we have in mind.” Sometimes, however, it is not the noun “spectator” (θεατής) that is used, but rather the participle “the (people) watching” (οἱ θεώμενοι), to refer to the play’s audience (Janko 2009: 271). This word comes from the same verbal root as θεατής and θέατρον and is used to refer not only to the audience at a dramatic performance but also to the spectators at a foot race or in the gymnasium.³ And, like θεατής, it too is used in cases in which hearing rather than seeing is at issue. The parabasis of *Clouds* begins with the chorus addressing the audience and saying, “Spectators, I am going to tell (ὦ θεώμενοι, κατερῶ, 518) you the truth openly,” and in *Peace* Hermes says of the title character that she won’t speak to the spectators (οὐκ ἂν εἴποι πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς θεωμένους, 658).

In contrast to this regular reference to the audience at dramatic performances as “spectators” or “viewers,” audiences for performances of other types of poetry or for recitations of works in prose are consistently called “hearers.” This is most clearly reflected in the titles and texts of two works of Plutarch, *On Listening* (37c–48d) and *How the Young Man Should Listen to Poetry* (14d–37b). The first, called Περί τοῦ ἀκούειν in the manuscripts and Περί τοῦ ἀκούειν τῶν φιλοσόφων (*On Listening to Philosophers*) in the Lamprias catalogue,⁴ itself originated as a lecture, as Plutarch tells us in the opening words of the treatise. He has committed the lecture to writing and sent it along to the young Nicander to give him advice regarding the frame of mind in

which he should listen to lectures by other philosophers and sophists, some of whom are not as genuinely concerned for Nicander's moral well-being as is Plutarch himself. The title of the work accurately reflects the contents, as Plutarch is indeed concerned with how Nicander and other young men in his vulnerable position ought to listen (e.g., ἀκούειν 38d, ἀκρόασιν ... ἀκοῦσαι 48d) to the words delivered by speakers in public lectures. The emphasis on listening in the title of the other treatise (*How the Young Man Should Listen to Poetry*) is even more interesting. In this essay Plutarch is as much concerned with what the young read as with what they hear, and he starts out by saying that it is necessary to exercise vigilance over the young with regard to both their listening and their reading habits (ἐν ταῖς ἀκρόασεσιν καὶ ἀναγνώσεσιν, 14f; Usener 1994: 164 n. 39). And throughout the treatise Plutarch speaks now of reading (15a, 30d, 36a, 37b) and now of hearing (e.g., 15b–d with its image of the Sirens, 16f, 20b, 26b, 28d) the works of poets. What this tells us is that, 800 years after the invention of writing, poetry was still often spoken of in terms of auditory experience, even the poetry of the distant past, which was experienced for the most part in the form of written texts (Schenkeveld 1992). For the poets whom Plutarch expects young men to be reading are, for the most part, Homer, Hesiod, the tragedians, and the writers of New Comedy. The latest poets cited in the work are Menander and Philemon, both of whom died in the third century BC. The slightly later Nicander, author of a versified treatise on antidotes to various venoms, is mentioned at 16c along with Empedocles and Parmenides (see Chapter 1, p. 7) as not, strictly speaking, qualifying as a poet.

The fact that Plutarch speaks in terms of “hearing” both dramatic and epic poets should not be seen as invalidating the point made in this chapter about the terminological distinction between “watching” drama and “listening to” epic. Like us, Plutarch lived in an age when literacy had advanced to the point of reducing drama, lyric poetry, and philosophy written in prose to the same status as “texts.” That is why Plutarch can refer even to the strikingly *visual* effect created by Aeschylus when, in his tragedy *The Weighing of Souls*, he put Zeus on stage balancing the fates of Achilles and Memnon in a giant scale, as “a mythical creation designed to delight and dazzle the *listener*” (17a). So, while we speak of “reading” Shakespeare or Milton, Plutarch in the first century speaks of “hearing” (in addition to “reading”) the works of Aeschylus and Homer. In the fifth century BC, however, at the time when tragedy and comedy were still more or less novelties, the novelty of the drama was signaled in part by the use of language that described the experience in visual terms. For this reason the anonymous author of the treatise *Philetaerus*, who lived in the third or

fourth century AFTER CHRIST and who was concerned to prescribe “correct” Attic usage in an age when knowledge of Classical prose was felt to be in danger of fading away, enjoined his readers to express themselves by saying “watch” (θεάσασθαι) tragedies and comedies, not “listen to” (ἀκούειν) them.⁵ He goes on to provide a model for this usage by quoting from Demosthenes’ *On the Peace* (5.7): “If you had been watching (ἐθεῶσθε) tragedies in the Theater of Dionysus. ...” This usage is confirmed, as we have seen, by the evidence of Aristophanes, in whose works the audience for drama is consistently referred to as a collection of “viewers.” There is a particularly interesting passage in *Frogs* that underlines the significance of this terminology. Throughout the play the characters speak of the Athenian audiences before whom Aeschylus and Euripides exhibit their tragedies as “viewers” (909, 919, 926, 1475). But, as Pluto’s slave explains to Xanthias, when Euripides died and found himself in the underworld, where there is apparently no venue for dramatic productions, he began to put on performances, not in the guise of a character from one of his plays but in his own person.⁶ That is, he started giving the equivalent of sophistic displays to the lowlifes who constitute the majority of the population in his new place of residence. Naturally, lacking any wit or sophistication, they were mightily impressed by his novel linguistic contortions and sophistries. In any event, since they were no longer witnessing a dramatic presentation, but instead were having the tragic poet address them in his own words and in his own person, they could no longer be described as “spectators” but instead became his “auditors” (ἀκροώμενοι, 774).

There is one other occasion in Aristophanes when a dramatic poet is spoken of as being “heard.” Here, too, we are confronted with an exception that provides confirmation of the rule that drama is primarily thought of as something seen rather than something heard. In *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides and his elderly relative witness Agathon’s performance of a scene from one of his latest tragedies. Euripides’ kinsman finds the performance so sensually appealing that he exclaims, “As I listened to it (ἐμοῦ γ’ ἀκρωμένου, 132) a twinge of desire came right over my backside.” But, despite the fact that Agathon is in costume, dressed as a woman (136–40, 148–52), this is not a dramatic performance. It takes place not in a theater but at Agathon’s house (29) and the playwright accompanies himself on a stringed instrument.⁷ The reason Agathon is playing a lyre, rather than the *aulos* that is the regular instrument of accompaniment on the tragic stage, is that he is alone and he cannot very well sing and play a wind instrument at the same time (Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 166). He is in the process of either composing a new work or rehearsing solo, for which reason he must take turns singing now the part of the

chorus, now that of the leader of the chorus. What he is doing by thus adopting various roles in alternation is no different from what is done by performers of nondramatic poetry, or by reciters of dramatic poetry in the age of Plutarch, who are properly spoken of as being “listened to.” So, for example, the rhapsode who performs the section of the *Iliad* that we refer to as Book One will recite alternately the words of Achilles and Agamemnon to a rapt audience of “listeners.” Likewise, the chorus who sing in alternation the speeches of Theseus and Minos in Bacchylides’ Delian dithyramb will have been “heard” in performance.

The vocabulary of “listening to” and “hearing” is the same kind of terminology Aristophanes uses to refer, for example, to the members of the Athenian Boule (*Knights* 629) or Assembly (*Thesmophoriazusae* 293–94; *Ecclesiazusae* 91) or to jurymen witnessing arguments in the law court (*Wasps* 391, 562, 569), but not, as far as I am aware, in connection with attendance at a dramatic performance.⁸ Nor is this a peculiarity of Aristophanes’ usage. Fifth- and fourth-century texts regularly refer to the audiences at sophistic displays, in the law courts, and at performances of nondramatic poetry as “auditors.” The earliest occurrences of the noun “auditor” (ἀκροατής) are in Thucydides and the Hippocratic treatise *On the Nature of Man*, which perhaps belongs to the late fifth century.⁹ Thucydides represents the statesman Pericles as opening his funeral oration in 431 BC by expressing concern that he may not satisfy the expectations of the knowledgeable auditor.¹⁰ *On the Nature of Man* contains the only occurrence of the noun ἀκροατής in the Hippocratic corpus, perhaps appropriately since it is in fact the text of a public lecture addressed to an audience of “listeners.” The work begins with a sentence in which the verb for “hearing” occurs not once but twice:

This lecture is not intended to be heard (ἀκούειν) by those who are accustomed to hear (ἀκούειν) discourses which inquire more deeply into the human constitution than is profitable for medical study.

The speaker goes on to criticize those who engage in such “deep” discourses, claiming that they do not in fact know what they are talking about (1.3):

A good illustration of this is provided by attending their disputations when the same disputants are present and the same audience (ἀκροατέων); the same man never wins the argument three times running.¹¹

It will be worth while to give some further examples of the pervasiveness of the vocabulary of “listening to” and “hearing” in reference to the works of those whom we today regard as “writers” of

both prose and poetry. For it is important for us to recognize that, in the fifth century BC, works of “literature” were experienced in performance and were regularly thought of in auditory terms. *On the Nature of Man* is not the only early Hippocratic treatise that takes the form of an oral presentation to an audience of listeners. Today’s readers of *On Breaths*, however, have to wait until nearly the end of the treatise before they are confronted with the recognition that what they have been reading on the page was originally intended to be heard.¹² After presenting his view at some length regarding the fundamental importance to health of the air that humans breathe, the author begins section 14 (out of 15) by saying that he will now try to persuade his hearers (τοὺς ἀκούοντάς) that the so-called sacred disease is also brought about by the effects of the breath, in this case by its interference with the proper functioning of the blood. *On Breaths* is, like *On the Nature of Man*, a sophistic display piece, or *epideixis*, and it is standard for the audiences of such *epideixeis* to be called “listeners.” Just as the author of *On Breaths* was concerned to demonstrate to his audience the preeminence of breath, so the sophist Gorgias, in his *Encomium of Helen*, seeks to impress on his hearers the almighty power of the spoken word. And so section 9 of that work includes the spoken words, “It is incumbent upon me to demonstrate this to my listeners (δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀκούουσιν).” This is a particularly interesting occurrence since, as we noted (in Chapter 1, p. 19), Gorgias ends his speech by referring to himself not as a speaker but as a writer: “I wished to write (γράψαι) my speech to serve as Helen’s encomium and as my own *jeu d’esprit*.” Clearly Gorgias has written out his speech for public delivery to an audience of listeners.¹³ Gorgias is the subject of one of Plato’s dialogues, entitled *Gorgias*, which opens with Socrates and Chaerephon arriving after the sophist has just finished delivering an *epideixis*. Chaerephon is nonetheless confident that he can convince his friend to deliver another one if Socrates wishes to hear (ἀκοῦσαι, 447b) him. Plato presents another sophist, Prodicus, who is a recognized expert in the precise use of words, as referring to the audiences at sophistic performances as “listeners” (ἀκροατάς, *Protagoras* 337a). Elsewhere, this term is applied to the audience attending Socrates’ trial (Plato, *Apology* 24e) and, in a famous characterization of Pericles’ skill as a public speaker, the comic poet Eupolis claims that Pericles was unique in his ability to “leave behind his sting in his hearers” (τοῖς ἀκρωμένοις, frag. 102.7 Kassel–Austin).

Not surprisingly, poets as well as speakers of prose are referred to as performing for an audience of “hearers.” An especially interesting instance of this is Herodotus’ colorful story of Arion, who was sailing home from Italy after enriching himself there by giving public performances of his music. The Corinthian sailors who were

transporting Arion plotted to throw him overboard and appropriate his riches for themselves. But Arion persuaded the sailors to allow him to dress up in his full regalia and give one last performance before throwing himself into the sea (where he will later be rescued by a dolphin). Despite Herodotus' insistence upon the "full regalia," which he mentions no fewer than four times in the course of a paragraph, it is the verb to "hear" (ἀκούσασθαι, 1.24.5) that he uses to describe the delight that came over the sailors at the prospect of witnessing a performance by the finest singer in the world.

We have seen repeatedly that the Greeks of the fifth century distinguish consistently between dramatic and nondramatic public performances, by using visual terminology for the former and auditory for the latter. There is no better illustration of the recognition of this consistency than the brilliant manipulation of this terminology in the speech that Thucydides puts into the mouth of Cleon in Book Three of his *History*. On the day before this speech was delivered, the Athenians voted to execute all the adult males and enslave all the women and children of the city of Mytilene, as punishment for the city's revolt from Athenian overlordship. Some Athenians, however, feeling that the decision was excessively harsh, succeeded in convening the Assembly in order to reconsider the matter. In his speech before the Assembly (3.37–40), Cleon reproaches the Athenians for their weakness of will and their inconstancy. These flaws in the Athenian character are rooted, according to Cleon, in the democratic form of government that his fellow citizens have adopted and in the very security that their empire has afforded them: Habitual absence of fear and the encouragement of public debate have turned the Athenians into patrons of a perverse sort of competition, one in which, he says, "you have accustomed yourselves to become spectators of speeches and auditors of deeds" (εἰώθατε θεαταὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων γίγνεσθαι, ἀκροαταὶ δὲ τῶν ἔργων, 3.38.4). This is a deliberately paradoxical, even provocative, formulation. For, as Arnold Gomme notes in his commentary on this passage, the Athenians "ought to *listen* to words and to *see* deeds with their eyes" (1956: 304, with original emphasis). Gomme goes on to say (304),

The rhetoric is effective; but the distinction is, of course, false (for in a theatre there is no difference between θεαταὶ and ἀκροαταὶ), and disappears in the next clause, where they listen to words (ἀπὸ τῶν εὖ εἰπόντων).

In his more recent commentary, Simon Hornblower (1991: 426) approves his predecessor's assessment, saying, "As Gomme notes, the distinction here made does not stand up to close scrutiny: a theatre audience both sees and listens."

I think Thucydides deserves more credit than his most distinguished commentators are willing to accord him.¹⁴ In the first place, as we have seen, Thucydides and his contemporaries consistently recognize a difference between *θεαταί* and *ἀκροαταί*, notwithstanding the fact that the latter have eyes and the former ears. In the second place, Gomme is disingenuous in saying that the distinction “disappears in the next clause, where they listen to words.” For, while the next clause contains a word that refers to speaking (*εἰπόντων*), there is no word that represents the Athenians as “listening.” On the contrary, the very next word in Thucydides’ text is a term derived from the sphere of vision: Cleon is reproaching his fellow citizens for “looking into (*σκοποῦντες*) the feasibility of future actions based upon the cleverness of their proponents whereas, when it comes to events that have already occurred, they do not consider the deed more authoritative from having witnessed it (*ᾧψει*) than the account of it.” Victor Bers (2009: 28) well compares with Cleon’s statement the words that Solon had addressed to an earlier audience of Athenians (frag. 11.7–8 West):

ἐς γὰρ γλῶσσαν ὀρᾷτε καὶ εἰς ἔπη αἰμύλου ἀνδρός,
εἰς ἔργον δ’ οὐδὲν γιγνόμενον βλέπετε.

You look to the speech and the words of a smooth-talking man,
but to a deed as it happens you pay no regard.

I do not agree with Bers, however, that this represents “an early reference to synaesthesia.” Rather, like Thucydides’ Cleon, Solon is committed to maintaining the distinction between seeing and hearing precisely because, in his opinion, the Athenians have gotten the two senses confused. They apply their keenest sense to the scrutiny of mere words, while they are content to allow the vital events of the day to be filtered through the imperfect apparatus of hearsay.¹⁵

Finally, despite Gomme and Hornblower’s references to the theater, there is nothing in Cleon’s speech that requires us to understand him to be using theatrical imagery.¹⁶ For, while the word *θεατής* is, as we have seen, frequently used to refer to the audience in the theater (*θέατρον*), that is not its only, or its original, application. It is, after all, merely the agent noun derived from the verb *θεᾶσθαι*, “to watch a spectacle” (whether that spectacle is staged or is an event in “real life”) or “to be a sightseer.” Both of these uses of the noun are attested in the fifth century in the works of Euripides. At *Ion* 301, the title character asks the stranger Creousa whether she has come to Delphi “as a sightseer (*θεατής*) or to consult the oracle.” Later in the same play (656), Xuthus discloses his plan to bring Ion, who he thinks is his son, into his home “on the pretense that he is a tourist (*θεατήν*)

in the land of the Athenians.” And the messenger in Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* begins his account of the battle that he witnessed by assuring the characters on stage (and the audience) that he had an excellent vantage point from which to watch events unfold, saying, “I took up my position as spectator (θεατής, 652; de Jong 1991: 9–10) at the Electran gate.” Similarly, a fable of Aesop (Perry 1952: 349, no. 71) recounts the story of a cowardly man who happens to find a golden lion; paralyzed by the conflicting forces of fear and greed, he eventually decides that he will have his servants assault the beast en masse while he sits at a safe distance as an onlooker (θεατής). And Herodotus tells us that many Greeks flocked to Egypt when Cambyses invaded that country, “some, as you might expect, for commercial reasons (κατ’ ἐμπορίην), others as combatants and still others as sightseers (θηηταί, 3.139.1).” A suspiciously similar sentiment is ascribed to the philosopher Pythagoras in an anecdote that Diogenes Laertius (8.8) recounts on the authority of Sosicrates: Comparing life to the Great Games, Pythagoras is supposed to have said that some come to compete (ἀγωνιούμενοι), others come for commercial reasons (κατ’ ἐμπορίαν), but the best come as spectators (θηηταί, perhaps with a hint at the word’s connection with θεωρία; cf. Rutherford 2000). Especially interesting in this connection is Aristotle’s use of the word in his *Rhetoric* (1358a36–b7). There Aristotle distinguishes three types of oratory (forensic, deliberative, and epideictic), but he divides the audiences (οἱ ἀκροαταί) into only two types, saying that a member of the audience necessarily serves either as a spectator (θεωρόν) or as a judge (κριτήν). That is, the listeners to forensic and deliberative oratory, by serving as jurymen and legislators respectively, have a hand in the outcome of the action, whereas those who listen to epideictic oratory are “mere spectators” (Cope 1877, vol. 1: 52, comparing Thucydides 3.38.4). The terminology that Aristotle is using is not likely to be drawn from the realm of the theater for, like Aristophanes in the previous century, he regularly uses the word θεατής to refer to the audience in a dramatic context.¹⁷ Rather, θεωρός points to the context of the games, whose audience was made up of people who could be referred to as θεαταί but were much more commonly called θεωροί.¹⁸

This, surely, is the type of spectatorship that Cleon has in mind, not the type involving theatrical performance. Or, rather, his primary concern is with athletic competition, but he has expressed himself in such a way that reference to a dramatic context is not excluded. For his speech bristles with the language of contests and competition, which is appropriate to both athletics and drama.¹⁹ He begins by comparing ordinary folks (favorably) with intellectuals: Unlike the latter, the former do not consider themselves smarter than the laws.

Having minds that are not burdened with the encumbrance of original thought, “they are for the most part successful in accomplishing their aims, since they serve as unbiased umpires (κριταί) rather than as contestants (ἀγωνισταί, 3.37.4).” In condemning his opponents in the debate, Cleon suggests, quite tendentiously, that they must either have been influenced by a successful attempt at bribery or have such confidence in their powers of persuasion as to endeavor (ἀγωνίσαιτ’ ἄν, 38.2) to show that what is resolved has not in fact been decided. Cleon continues (38.3), “As a result of contests (ἀγώνων) such as these, the city awards prizes (ᾄθλα) to others but assumes the risks itself.” He makes it clear, in the sentence that we quoted at the beginning of this discussion, that he assigns the blame for this state of affairs on the very members of the Assembly whom he is now addressing (38.4): “You, as the patrons of a perverse sort of competition (κακῶς ἀγωνοθετοῦντες), are responsible for this, since you have accustomed yourselves to become spectators of speeches and auditors of deeds.” The perversity of the sort of competition that the Athenians patronize, according to Cleon, is highlighted shortly afterward (38.7), when he upbraids his fellow citizens for “being absolutely undone by the pleasure of listening (ἀκοῆς ἡδονῇ) and giving the appearance of being idle spectators of sophists (σοφιστῶν θεαταῖς) rather than men deliberating on political affairs.” The expression “spectators of sophists” is striking precisely because, as we have seen, an audience for a sophistic display ought to be referred to as “auditors.” Cleon returns to the Athenians’ destructive delight in listening when they should be watching later in his speech. He presents himself as a doer of deeds, saying that he fought for the previous day’s decision and he is now fighting (διαμάχομαι, 40.2) to ensure that that decision not be overturned and to prevent the Athenians from being “led astray by three things that are least advantageous to the empire, compassion, delight in talk (ἡδονῇ λόγων) and civility.” The pleasure that speakers provide (τέρποντες λόγῳ, 40.3) is of only brief duration and is followed by great pain for the city; the speakers themselves will not suffer, but will go on to compete in a contest (ἀγῶνα) that is concerned with other, less momentous issues. That is, after they have attempted to sway the crowd in the Assembly with their words, they will engage in sophistic debates on trivial matters that have nothing to do with affairs of state.

The slipperiness of Cleon’s argument consists not in the fact that he confuses hearing and seeing – this is what he accuses the Athenians of doing – but that he conflates deliberation about proposed courses of action and judgment concerning events that either have taken place or are taking place at the present time.²⁰ Like many speakers who wish to appeal to the least discerning members of their audience, Cleon

attempts to represent the point at issue as simple and straightforward. Disregarding the fact that the future cannot be “witnessed,” Cleon reproaches his audience for not using their eyes, or, rather, for using their eyes to see not events but words. Instead of being spectators at, say, a contest in the Olympic Games, where one can see with one’s own eyes who is winning and who is not, the Athenians prefer to watch sophists perform in public. But to “watch” a sophist is tantamount to allowing oneself to be deceived, because the sophist has only words to show his audience. An audience that “watches” words is deluding itself into thinking that it is seeing something with its own eyes, whereas words can only be *about* events, and thus can distort the truth of those events according to the will of the speaker. Cleon – or, more likely, Thucydides – is exploiting the idea, often expressed in Greek literature and elsewhere, that what one sees is more trustworthy than what one hears. This is a *topos* that appeared earlier in Thucydides’ *History*, in the mouth of the Athenian delegation at Sparta in Book One. The Athenian speaker declined to dwell on events of the distant past, events “the witnesses of which are verbal reports (ἄκοαὶ λόγων) rather than the direct visual experience (ὄψις) of the audience” (1.73.2). Characteristically, the word Thucydides chooses to employ to express “audience” means, literally, “those who are about to hear” (τῶν ἀκουσομένων), thus acknowledging that words are less reliable than the audience’s own perceptions, while at the same time implying that the audience’s perceptions will only confirm what the speaker has to say.

It is not only the speakers in Thucydides who employ this *topos* for their own purposes (Schepens 1980: 99–102). The historian himself exploits his own audience’s suspicion of what can be learned from mere hearsay. In his programmatic statement, Thucydides on two occasions suggests that his own *History* is distinguished by its reliability and rationality from works that he goes out of his way to characterize in auditory terms. At 1.21.1 he assures his readers that he will not indulge in the exaggerations characteristic of the poets, nor will he emulate the *logographoi*, whose confections are designed to be more attractive to the ears (τῇ ἀκροάσει) than to be truthful. Shortly after, at 1.22.4, Thucydides acknowledges that his refusal to sensationalize (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες) may perhaps render his work less delightful to the ear (ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ... ἀτερπέστερον). The contrast between seeing and hearing, which is perhaps latent at 1.21.1, is here made explicit. For he goes on to complete the antithesis that the μέν had initiated by saying, “On the other hand, as far as those who may wish to contemplate (σκοπεῖν) exactly what happened in the past ..., it will be sufficient if they judge the present work to be of some value.”

An interesting gloss on these Thucydidean passages is provided by

an admirer of the historian who, however, lacks Thucydides' incisive intelligence and fundamental seriousness of purpose. In his speech *To Nicocles*, composed in the late 370s BC, Isocrates instructs the young Cypriot king regarding, among other things, the kinds of literature that will best conduce toward his improvement as a monarch. In the course of his discussion, Isocrates points out that those who wish to create something in either poetry or prose (ἢ ποιεῖν ἢ γράφειν, 48) that is pleasing to the masses will avoid the didactic mode and will seek out the most sensational types of material (τοὺς μυθωδεστάτους, sc. λόγους), using the same word that Thucydides had used and, perhaps, had invented. Isocrates immediately continues by invoking the same distinction between seeing and hearing that Cleon had so artfully exploited: "For the delight which we derive from hearing (ἀκούοντες) such types of material is comparable to that which we derive from watching (θεωροῦντες) contests and competitions." But, while Cleon had used contests and competitions as a metaphor for the real and consequential occurrences of political life, Isocrates is interested in them only for their entertainment value. And so, he says, using a variety of logic not encountered again before Alice fell down the rabbit hole, that is why Homer recounts stories involving contests and wars among legendary heroes and (departing still further from the thought processes of responsible adults) that is why the pioneers in the composition of tragedy presented those stories in the form of contests and actions, "so that they could not only be heard by us but seen as well (ὥστε μὴ μόνον ἀκουστοὺς ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ καὶ θεατοὺς γενέσθαι, 49)." Needless to say, Isocrates' apparent denigration of Homer and Aeschylus as mere entertainers who pander to their audience's puerile craving for visual stimulation is not shared by ancient or modern critics, nor is his seeming preference for what one hears over what one sees.

What Thucydides says in Book One and what he has Cleon say in Book Three rely for their effectiveness on deep-seated associations in the Greek mind between vision and truth on the one hand and hearing and (deceptive) pleasure on the other. Traditionally, poets give pleasure to their audiences and, as we have seen, traditional poets are consistently associated with the sense of hearing.²¹ Hearing, in turn, is traditionally contrasted with vision, regarded as the more trustworthy sense and the sense regularly associated with accuracy and reliability (Marincola 1997: 63–86). For, according to Heraclitus (frag. 6 Marcovich), "Eyes are a more precise witness than ears." Herodotus expresses the same sentiment somewhat differently when he has Candaules say to Gyges (1.8.2), "Men's ears are, in fact, less reliable than their eyes." "Seeing is believing," or words to that effect, appears to have been proverbial for both the Greeks and the

Romans.²² Accordingly, messengers on the tragic stage (and, presumably, in real life) seek to assure their hearers of their reliability by saying that their report is based on their own eyewitness experience rather than on an account heard from another source.²³ Of course, there is a certain irony involved in *reporting* that one has seen something, as opposed to merely having heard a *report*, an irony that seems never to have occasioned any comment. Even having a direct auditory experience of an event while it is happening does not have the same evidentiary value as witnessing it with one's eyes. So, in the "Homeric" *Hymn to Demeter* we find Hecate telling Demeter (57), and later Demeter telling Helios (67–68), that she personally heard Persephone's cries for help but did not see the abduction, so that neither is able to identify the culprit. In this instance, both Hecate and Demeter were witnesses, but not eyewitnesses, and so recourse is ultimately had to Helios, the god who sees everything.²⁴

Finally, the two matters that we have just now been concerned with, the auditory terminology that the ancient Greeks associated with the experience of nondramatic literature and the superior value placed by them on vision in comparison with hearing, come together nicely in some comments made by later Greek theorists in connection with the quality of *enargeia*.²⁵ This quality – namely, the author's ability to give the impression, as Quintilian puts it (6.2.32), not so much of recounting as displaying – is counted a virtue in poets, orators, and historians. Thucydides, in particular, is praised for this quality, for example, by Plutarch, who says that he "strives to attain such a degree of *enargeia* as to transform the auditor into a spectator" (θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατὴν, *On the Fame of the Athenians* 347a). Herodotus, too, is given credit by the author of *On the Sublime* for "turning the auditory experience into the visual" (τὴν ἀκοὴν ὄψιν ποιῶν, 26.2) with his power to produce vivid description. Elsewhere, the same author commends the ability among poets that enables the poet to "imagine that he sees what he is describing and to produce it for the hearers to see" (ὅπ' ὄψιντιθῆς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν, 15.1). And, when Dionysius of Halicarnassus singles out for comment the *enargeia* of Lysias' style, he does so not only by using explicitly visual terminology, but also by introducing a theatrical image, thereby underlining the connection that we have identified between the drama and the visual terminology regularly used to describe it. In his essay on Lysias, Dionysius says, "No one who pays close attention to the speeches of Lysias can be either so insensible or so exacting or so dull-witted as not to suppose that he or she is seeing the events that are recounted as actually taking place and, as it were, interacting face-to-face with the cast of characters that the orator brings onto the stage" (οἷς ἂν ὁ ῥήτωρ εἰσάγηπροσώποις ὁμιλεῖν, *Lysias* 7).²⁶ That is to say, the oratory of

Lysias is being praised for its ability to conjure for its audience a vivid tableau; the terms used, however, are not those of “real life” but of the drama. As we will see, the idea that oratory aspires to the status of the drama is, with good reason, not uncommon among ancient Greek writers.

¹ *Poetics* 1453b1–7, translated by Else (1957: 407).

² “Spectators” (θεαταί): Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 442, *Knights* 228, *Clouds* 574, *Wasps* 1071, 1527, *Peace* 1115, *Birds* 753, *Thesmophoriazusae* 391, and *Frogs* 919; Cratinus frags. 182.3 and 342 Kassel–Austin; Eupolis frag. 392.1 Kassel–Austin; and Menander, *Perikeiromene* 171. “Viewing stands” (θέατρον): Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 629; Herodotus 6.67.3; and Thucydides 8.93.1.

³ *Frogs* 132; Antiphon 3.4.5; Isocrates 4.44; cf. Xenophon, *Symposium* 2.11–12 and *Anabasis* 4.8.27; Lucian, *Nigrinus* 14; and Plutarch, *Progress in Virtue* 79e.

⁴ For the Lamprias catalogue, see Ziegler (1964: 60–66).

⁵ Dain (1954: 44, §28).

⁶ The word used, ἐπεδείκνυτο (771), is regularly associated with rhetorical displays; see Thomas (2000: 249–60). Bury (1932: 70) is mistaken to cite this passage (alone) as evidence for the use of this word “of theatrical displays”; as is the case here, so in the passage on which Bury is commenting (Plato, *Symposium* 194b), the reference is to the playwright speaking *in propria persona*.

⁷ Both a βάρβιτος (137) and a λύρα (138) are mentioned; it is not clear whether one instrument or two are involved (Austin and Olson 2004: 101–2). In any event, the lyre was rarely if ever used in performances of tragedy (P. Wilson 1999: 76).

⁸ When Isocrates (*Panathenaicus* 168) speaks of “hearing about the misfortunes of Adrastus” from the tragic poets at the Dionysia, he is using the verb in the special sense of “to hear of” (Austin and Olson 2004: 112) and is referring to tragedy as a source of mythical accounts rather than as an aesthetic experience.

⁹ Jouanna (1975: 59–61) dates the work to 420–400 BC, and most

likely to 410–400.

¹⁰ Thucydides 2.35.2. The occurrence of the word ἀκροατής in Cleon's speech (3.38.4) will be discussed separately in this chapter.

¹¹ Translations by J. Chadwick and W.N. Mann, in G.E.R. Lloyd (1978: 260, slightly adapted).

¹² For the date of *On Breaths* (last quarter of the fifth century), see Jouanna (1988: 48–49).

¹³ The same, surely, is true of lyric poets, who must have written out their poems, which were intended for oral delivery; but, as we have seen (this chapter, p. 21), poets were spoken of as “creators” rather than as “writers.” Schenkeveld (1992: 137–38) is thus mistaken to use the vocabulary of “writing” to call into question the identification of *On the Nature of Man* as a “lecture” (a word whose etymology, interestingly enough, points to an origin in the culture of writing).

¹⁴ Much more satisfactory is the discussion by Wille (2001: 606–12).

¹⁵ Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010: 336–37). For the superiority of vision to hearing, see Malten (1961: 63) and Clay (1983: 13). For vision as the keenest of the senses, see Plato, *Phaedrus* 250d, and Cicero, *De oratore* 2.357; for its complex association with truth in early Greek thought, see Luther (1966). According to Aristotle, vision is the sense *par excellence* (ἡ ὄψις μάλιστα αἰσθησίς ἐστι, *De anima* 429a2–3); see Beare (1906: 231).

¹⁶ Nightingale (2004: 51 n. 40). Still, Roselli (2011: 55) refers to “the use of theatrical language” in Cleon's speech. The passage just quoted from Solon, however, confirms that there is no necessary reference to the theater, as the drama is a development that occurred after Solon's lifetime.

¹⁷ For example, *Poetics* 1453a35 and 1455a29; and *Politics* 1336b20 and 1336b30.

¹⁸ The satyrs who made up the chorus of Aeschylus' *Theoroi* (a play also known as *Isthmiastai*) were not going to watch dramatic

performances, which were not a feature of the Isthmian Games, but athletic contests (Krumeich, Pechstein, and Seidensticker 1999: 131–48). The comic poets regularly refer to their audiences as θεαταί (see note 2, this chapter), never as θεωροί. For the role of *theoroi*, see Dillon (1997: 11–12) and Nightingale (2004: 49–52).

¹⁹ For the common use of agonistic terminology for both drama and sport, see Larmour (1999: 26–55).

²⁰ Contrast the clarity of Aristotle, who distinguishes different classes of audiences (ἀκροαταῖτων λόγων): jurors, who make judgments regarding the past, and members of the Assembly, who make judgments regarding the future (*Rhetoric* 1358a37–b5).

²¹ For the pleasure of poetry, see Walsh (1984, esp. 3–22) and Pratt (1993: 30–33).

²² Von Leutsch and Schneidewin (1839–1851, vol. 2: 744) and Otto (1890: 251). See, however, Callimachus frag. 282 Pfeiffer, with Hollis (1990: 293–94).

²³ Aeschylus, *Persians* 266–67 and *Seven against Thebes* 41–42; Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 746–47; Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 684; cf. Hesiod frag. 199.3 Merkelbach–West; Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 896–97, *Oedipus the King* 6–7, and *Philoctetes* 445; Euripides, *Medea* 654–55, *Troades* 481–83, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 901, *Helen* 117, and *Orestes* 730; and Plato, *Phaedo* 57a and *Theaetetus* 201b–c.

²⁴ For “the Sun as watcher over all things,” see N. Richardson (1974: 171, on line 62).

²⁵ For *enargeia*, see Zanker (1981), Kemmann (1996), and Manieri (1998: 97–192).

²⁶ For εἰσάγειν as “a technical term from the theater,” see Else (1957: 620 n. 94); for πρόσωπον = “role,” see Schlossmann (1906: 38–39); and for the expression εἰσάγειν πρόσωπον, “to bring a character onto the stage,” see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Imitation* frag. 31.2.11 (Usener and Radermacher 1929: 206); and Diodorus of Sicily 37.12.1.

The Muse Takes a Holiday

In his essay *On Listening*, Plutarch recounts an anecdote about a certain Melanthius who, when asked his opinion of a tragedy by Diogenes, responded that he was prevented from watching it because his view was obscured by the words. Nor should it come as a surprise to us that the ancient Greeks distinguished between the experience of dramatic and nondramatic poetry by applying visual terminology to the former and auditory to the latter. Today, after all, we “listen” to the radio, but we “watch” television. We go to “hear” a concert, but we go to “see” a movie. It is only natural for me to speak of “hearing” my colleague, the baritone Nathan Gunn, in recital and “seeing” him in the opera house singing the role of Billy Budd. Now, while hearing Nathan Gunn in recital is a wonderfully dramatic experience, the drama in, say, Schubert’s *Die schöne Müllerin* is achieved entirely through auditory means and can be conveyed as well to an audience that has its eyes closed. Britten’s opera, however, accomplishes its dramatic ends largely through musical means, but additionally through the interaction on stage of the characters Billy Budd, Captain Vere, and John Claggert, which the audience is intended to see as well as hear. The opera is an adaptation for the stage of Melville’s novella, so that what we see and hear in the opera house represents the addition of music, stage action, scenery, and other visual and auditory effects to what was originally conceived as a literary fiction, to be read with the eyes by an audience consisting of a series of single, silent individuals. We are familiar with this convention of adapting “literary” sources for the operatic stage, and we are familiar with all the various components – dramatic representation, vocal and orchestral music, and so on – of which an operatic performance is composed. Modern opera is itself a composite genre that arose in the years around 1600 by combining a variety of components that were already in existence. It is the thesis of Herington’s *Poetry into Drama* that Attic drama similarly arose as an amalgam of preexisting elements. The difference, however, between the development of the drama and the creation of opera is that the inspiration for the latter

came largely from the renaissance fascination with the theoretical works of Plato and Aristotle (Katz 1986: esp. 77–110; Palisca 2006). Essentially, modern opera is an attempt to recreate the art of Greek drama in the absence of a living performance tradition connecting the ancient with the modern world. It is for this reason that most early operas, and an impressive number of more recent ones, are based on material from the ancient Greek and, to a lesser extent, Roman worlds (Ewans 2007; McDonald 2001).

There is, then, an apparent continuity between Attic tragedy on the one hand and modern opera and drama on the other. We need to be aware, however, that this continuity is only apparent and is subject to the decisive influence of the fourth-century BC theoreticians, Plato and Aristotle. We have already seen that Aristotle's dismissal of *opsis* in his *Poetics* is at odds with the regular terminology that we saw applied in the fifth century to the "viewers" of tragedy as opposed to the "auditors" of other forms of poetic and nonpoetic performance. This dismissal is consistent with Aristotle's considered view that tragedy is just another form of poetic composition, different from but comparable to epic or elegiac verse. According to Aristotle, Sophocles and Homer are equally practitioners of the art of poetic imitation (*Poetics* 1448a25–27), the difference being that Homer narrates part of the time and dramatizes part of the time, whereas Sophocles never narrates (20–24). That is to say, parts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* consist of direct quotations, with Homer speaking as though he were Nestor or Penelope, while in other parts Homer describes the actions of the poems' characters in his own narrative voice.¹ Sophocles' *Antigone*, on the other hand, contains no narration by the poet, and consists solely of actors speaking (and singing) words that purport to be coming directly from the performers of the play's action, Antigone, Creon, the chorus of Theban citizens, and so on. This distinction between narration and dramatization is clearly fundamental to Aristotle's understanding of the distinction between tragedy, which is pure dramatization, and epic, which is a mixture of the two modes. Later in the *Poetics*, when Aristotle defines tragedy, he specifies that the genre is a mimetic performance carried out by "men performing the actions rather than the actions being conveyed through narration" (δρῶντων καὶ οὐ δ' ἀπαγγελίας, 1449b26); epic differs from tragedy in that, in the former, "there is narration."²

This dichotomy, between actions being performed and actions being described, is extremely unfortunate. On the surface, it appears to be a perfectly reasonable distinction: Menelaus' attendants, for example, perform the action of seizing and binding Andromache before our eyes on the tragic stage (Euripides, *Andromache* 425), whereas Homer describes Achilles performing the action of seizing

and binding 12 Trojans in his epic poem (*Iliad* 21.30). But the aristocratic Aristotle is not particularly concerned with actions performed by or on slaves and nameless minor characters and, in any event, the distinction between the ways in which Euripides and Homer represent these acts of seizure is not accommodated in Aristotle's schema. For, according to Aristotle, Homer's method of composition (ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος ποιεῖ, 1448a21–22) consists of passages in which he narrates and passages in which he takes on some other role. But the only times – apart from the brief invocations of the Muse – when Homer is not narrating is when he is engaged in direct quotation of the words of Nestor, Penelope, or some other character. In other words, the only “actions” engaged in by Homeric characters are either narrated by the poet or words spoken by the poet. We can see the difficulties this creates for Aristotle's dichotomy in, for example, the first book of the *Iliad* (1.197–220), where Homer first describes Athena catching Achilles by the hair and Achilles turning around and recognizing her; then the poet speaks the words of Achilles and Athena, and then again Achilles (“I must obey you”); then he describes Achilles sheathing his sword in obedience to the words of Athena. Of course, the poet or the rhapsode in performance can accompany the words he recites with facial and other bodily gestures, and it may be suggested that these constitute “actions,” perhaps even the “actions” that Aristotle distinguishes from the narration of the poet. Indeed, it appears from the conversation between Socrates and the rhapsode Ion (Plato, *Ion* 535b–d; cf. Herington 1985: 11–15) that reciters of epic verse typically were quite carried away with their performance and undoubtedly enhanced their verbal delivery with vigorous gestures and facial expressions that, because of the convention of masking, even tragic actors could not convey.

But the use of physical gestures by rhapsodes, so far from supplying evidence of “actions,” along with narration, in connection with the performance of epic poetry, in fact underlines the problematic nature of Aristotle's seemingly straightforward dichotomy. Let us look at a brief portion of the scene involving Achilles and Athena and let us try to imagine its performance by the poet himself or by a rhapsode like Ion (*Iliad* 1.215–21, in Lattimore's 1951 translation):

Then in answer again spoke Achilleus of the swift
feet: 215

“Goddess, it is necessary that I obey the word of you two,
angry though I am in my heart. So it will be better.
If any man obeys the gods, they listen to him also.”

He spoke, and laid his heavy hand on the silver sword hilt
and thrust the great blade back into the scabbard nor
disobeyed 220
the word of Athene.

It is reasonable to suppose that the reciter mimed the gesture of Achilles returning his sword to its scabbard, just as he had, presumably, earlier imitated the gesture described in line 194: “drawing from its scabbard the great sword.” But did the imitation here accompany Homer’s description of the gesture (220)? Or did it accompany the spoken enactment of the role of Achilles (216–18)? The sheathing of the sword in obedience to the bidding of Athena is, after all, the action that corresponds to Achilles’ words “it is necessary that I obey.” On the tragic stage, the action and the words would appropriately occur simultaneously, but the narrative mode requires that words and action be presented in sequence. The reciter of Homer’s poem, however, is faced with a choice: Either his miming of Achilles’ action accompanies (a) Achilles’ words or (b) the narration or, perhaps, is drawn out so as to cover (c) both direct quotation and narrative description. In any event, the easy dichotomy that Aristotle sought to draw between actions performed and actions narrated is fatally undermined. For the same action is both performed and narrated, either sequentially, as in (a), or concurrently, as in (b) and (c).

How can Aristotle have been so blind to the implications of his distinction between tragedy and epic in terms of actions narrated and actions performed? And how did this distinction arise in Aristotle’s mind? The answers to these questions would seem to be related to the circumstances of Aristotle’s life and training. As we saw in Chapter 1, Aristotle was predisposed to close his eyes to the visual component of drama as a result of his preference for the written form in which he, in contrast to “the masses,” enjoyed the dramatic experience. His preference for the written form of epic over rhapsodic performance is a priori even more likely.³ Already by the fourth century, the existence of written texts of plays and other literary creations had apparently given rise to the possibility of conceiving of the “work of art” in the abstract, and so Aristotle can speak of plot (*mythos*) as “the guiding principle and, as it were, the soul of tragedy” (ἀρχὴ ... καὶ οἶον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγωδίας, *Poetics* 1450a38). As Gerald Else puts it, plot “is the ἀρχή of the poem just as the idea of house in the builder’s mind is the ἀρχή of the house.”⁴ According to Aristotle, tragedy cannot exist without plot, but it can exist without character (1450a23–25) and, presumably, without the other components that are even less important than character.

Once tragedy (or comedy or epic) has been reduced to this degree

of abstraction, it is easy to see how the question of whether a specific action is described by a narrator or enacted on a stage might appear to be relatively trivial. And the relatively trivial nature of the distinction may seem even more apparent when one considers that, in tragedy, some of the most memorable elements of the plot are not enacted on stage at all but are reported in messenger speeches (Zeppezauer 2011). The death of Hippolytus, the suicide of Ajax, the blinding of Oedipus, and the dismemberment of Pentheus are among the most powerful and vivid “scenes” in Attic tragedy, and yet they are narrated in very much the same way Homer narrates the blinding of Polyphemos. Indeed, Aristotle’s contemporaries, the Greek vase painters of southern Italy and Sicily, who often drew their subjects from the plots of Attic tragedy and comedy, included in scenes clearly intended to give a visual representation of a particular play incidents or characters that were not in fact visible to the audience in the theater (Taplin 2007: 24, 62–64). Like Aristotle, the vase painters and their patrons abstracted the action of the play from the mode in which the action was conveyed to the audience. The difference, however, is that, in the *Poetics*, Aristotle was imagining the plot as taking shape in the mind of the poet, whereas the painter was interpreting in a visual medium the plot of the fully realized drama, either on the basis of the written text of the play or from the experience of a staged performance. The very fact that it is not clear in a given instance whether the inspiration for the vase painter was a text or a performance may seem to corroborate Aristotle’s view that the two media differ in only superficial ways. That is not, however, necessarily the case. The painter’s medium requires that all the elements necessary to “tell the story” be presented simultaneously, even if the strict logic of the story does not allow them to occupy the same temporal or spatial frame. A comparable violation of the strict logic of the story arises in connection with the visual art of the Archaic Period, at a time before the invention of the drama. So, for example, the scene depicted on the Protoattic name vase of the Polyphemos Painter, from the second quarter of the seventh century BC, shows the blinding of a wide-awake, upright Polyphemos, who is still holding the cup of wine whose function in the plot is to cause the Cyclops to pass out in a drunken stupor.⁵

Greek vase painters had, from the earliest introduction of figured scenes, been in the habit of representing incidents from the rich repertoire of traditional stories, or *mythoi*. By the time of Aristotle, these stories had been enhanced by the added visual impact that presentation on the tragic stage brought to them, and so the artists began to create visual representations of stories that had long been the subject of epic and other narrative forms for patrons who were now

perhaps more familiar with those stories in their tragic guise. The great popularity of these vases provides ample evidence of the rapid rise and widespread acceptance of Attic tragedy (and comedy) throughout the Greek world, and the spectacular character of several of them attests to the importance placed on what Aristotle regards as the least essential element of tragedy, namely, *opsis*. Thus, fourth-century vase painting, so far from supporting Aristotle's view of tragedy as a genre whose essence can be conveyed equally well through other means, would seem to contradict it. Or, rather, the popularity of the tragic stage and the visual representations that were influenced by it may in fact help to explain Aristotle's denigration of the visual component of the drama (see Chapter 1, p. 12).

Aristotle's aristocratic disdain for mass-market theatrical spectacles can also be explained with reference to his intellectual training in the Academy of the even more aristocratic Plato, from whom some, at least, of his views on literature and drama are clearly derived. As has long been recognized, Aristotle's dichotomy between narrative and direct impersonation and his distinction between epic and tragic poetry on the basis of that dichotomy are dependent upon Plato's treatment of poetry in Book Three of the *Republic* (Finsler 1900: 62–65). In Plato's fictionalized conversation between Socrates and Plato's brother Adeimantus, Socrates proposes that all stories told by poets or storytellers are presented in straightforward narration, through impersonation, or by a mixture of the two (392d). The fact that Adeimantus requires explanation and elaboration, which Socrates is only too happy to provide, shows that the distinction drawn here was an unfamiliar one (Lucas 1968: 66), and perhaps originated with Plato. Once Socrates has explained what he means, he illustrates the distinction by reiterating that tragedy and comedy are presented entirely through impersonation while epic is presented through a combination of impersonation and narration by the poet in his own person.⁶ This distinction was of more than strictly theoretical interest to Plato. All of his written work, apart from the *Epistles* attributed to him, some or all of which were not in fact written by Plato, is in the form of prose dialogues. Some of those dialogues, including the early *Crito* and the late *Timaeus*, contain no narration, and are presented in an entirely "dramatic" form. Others of the dialogues, including the Middle-Period *Republic* itself, are presented in narrative form, with the narrator, usually Socrates, reporting the words of the various interlocutors, generally in the form of direct quotation but on occasion in the form of extended indirect discourse (Tarrant 1955).

It is obvious, therefore, that Plato devoted a great deal of considered thought to the differences between the straight dramatic mode, as exemplified, say, by Sophocles' *Antigone*, and the mixed

dramatic and narrative mode in which the Homeric poems were composed, notwithstanding the fact that Sophocles and Homer were poets, while Plato worked in the medium of prose. Ruby Blondell has recently argued that Plato's dialogues should be thought of as having been created, like most ancient Greek texts, with some measure of "performance" in mind (Blondell 2002: 21–25). She recognizes, however, that the scale and popular involvement in performances of texts like the Platonic dialogues cannot have resembled those of fully staged dramatic productions and, interestingly, in the end she suggests that "it is most plausible to envisage most of Plato's works as occasionally performed, *probably by a single narrator*, whether for Academy members or a wider audience" (25, with emphasis added). That is, despite her full awareness of the care that Plato has taken to differentiate the dramatic and the narrated dialogues, she recognizes – rightly, in my view – that for Plato this distinction did not represent a fundamental difference in the way an audience experiences an actor speaking the lines of Antigone and a rhapsode quoting the words of Achilles. As we have seen, however, the audience for the former would be spoken of as consisting of "viewers," for the latter as consisting of "auditors." Yet it is unimaginable that anyone would have distinguished between Plato's dramatic *Timaeus* and his narrative *Republic* by speaking of "watching" the former – as one would naturally speak of "watching" Sophocles' *Antigone* – in contrast to "hearing" the latter. Clearly, then, for Plato, as for his pupil Aristotle, the distinction between the narrative and the dramatic modes was relatively superficial. Plato's reasons for choosing one mode over another for a particular dialogue are both profound and subtle, but no one, I think, would argue that his choice was influenced by the visual-auditory distinction that so prominently marks the difference between the two modes in the minds of his contemporaries. Indeed, the one dialogue that is especially "dramatic" and most relies on scene setting and physical interaction between interlocutors, namely the *Symposium*, is the one whose narrative status is most insistently marked, being presented as Apollodorus' report in indirect discourse of Aristodemus' account of a memorable event at Agathon's house.

The reasons for Plato's attitude are bound up with the very difficult questions surrounding the relationship between Plato's and Socrates' views on art, Plato's theories concerning mimesis, and Plato's profoundly ambivalent relationship with the works of the poets, especially the dramatic poets: According to what Socrates says in the *Apology* (18a–d), Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates in the *Clouds* represents an especially dangerous source of the prejudice that ultimately led to Socrates' trial and execution. Even if I were capable of making a meaningful contribution to the contentious scholarship on

any of these matters, this would not be the place to do so.⁷ It will, however, be relevant to take a brief look at the passage in Book Three of the *Republic* that we have mentioned and at the dialogue *Ion*, because in those two places Plato treats, in seemingly very different ways, the relationship between the narrative and the dramatic mode. The two passages are in some respects complementary, as the focus of the *Republic* is largely, but not exclusively, on the effects of poetry on the audience, while the point of view of the *Ion* is that of the performer. Let us begin with the *Republic*, where Socrates is discussing with Adeimantus the poetry that will constitute the foundation of the education proposed for the guardians of Callipolis. After having passed in review the appropriate sorts of stories that can be told about gods, *daimons*, and heroes – discussion of stories about mortals is to be postponed until after a satisfactory understanding of the nature of justice is attained – Socrates turns to a consideration of the manner of presentation of those stories. Once that has been accomplished, says Socrates, “We will have examined fully both what ought to be said and how it ought to be said” (ἡμῖν ἅ τε λεκτέον καὶ ὡς λεκτέον παντελῶς ἐσκέψεται, 392c), drawing what appears to be a neat distinction between content and form. The primacy of content, however, is clear, both from the fact that it has been introduced first (and at greater length) and from much of what Socrates says in the course of the discussion.

A good deal of the initial discussion, at the end of Book Two and the start of Book Three, is concerned with determining what sorts of material the guardians can be allowed to be exposed to and what sorts ought to be forbidden. The examples, both positive and negative, are drawn almost entirely from the Homeric poems, although there are occasional (negative) references to, and quotations from, Aeschylean tragedy (380a, 381d, 383b, 391e). Poets ought not to ascribe base motives to the gods or represent them as being responsible for evils. Nor should gods or heroes be portrayed as losing control of themselves under the influence of extreme emotion, as when Homer describes Achilles, Priam, and Zeus grieving and lamenting (388a–d). Rather, poets should present instances of endurance, enacted and expressed by admirable men (καὶ λέγονται καὶ πράττονται ὑπὸ ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν), to be watched and heard (θεατέον τε καὶ ἀκουστέον, 390d) by audiences. According to James Adam, in his note on this passage (1902, vol. 1: 140), Socrates is referring to actions “described e.g. in poetry by Homer’s heroes, or done in actual life before our eyes. θεατέον refers to πράττονται, ἀκουστέον to λέγονται by the usual chiasmus.” But the discussion throughout this section of the *Republic* is concerned with poetic representation, not with models of behavior from “actual life.” And, as we have seen, the vocabulary of “watching”

versus “hearing” is regularly associated with the distinction between dramatic and rhapsodic performance, so that Penelope Murray is undoubtedly correct to note that the language here suggests a reference to “dramatic representations as well as epic recitals” (1996: 165). At the same time, Murray agrees with Adam that the watching and hearing are related chiasmatically to the speaking and acting, which would mean that Plato is referring to watching actions performed by admirable men on the dramatic stage and hearing their words spoken by a rhapsode. The illustration that Socrates immediately supplies, however, is a two-line quotation from Homer, which represents Odysseus both acting and speaking (*Odyssey* 20.17–18):

Striking his chest he addressed his heart with reproachful words:

“Bear up, now, my heart! You have borne even worse before.”

This makes it somewhat more difficult to assume that Plato is here following the usual practice of his day by referring to “watching” drama and “listening to” epic recitation. In fact, throughout the discussion Plato has seemed to be concerned to undermine that convention. The Homeric examples that are given by Socrates vary between narration and direct quotation, while the one just quoted is a combination of the two. And one of the examples quoted from tragedy is introduced with the comment that this is the sort of thing the young ought not to be allowed to *listen* to (380a). At the same time, throughout the discussion, expressions equivalent to “in word and deed” keep recurring, but the latter are not purveyed exclusively by dramatic poets or the former exclusively by epic poets. Indeed, it is to the first book of the *Iliad* that Socrates turns when he wants to give Adeimantus an example of what he means by the distinction between straightforward narration and impersonation (392d–93c). As Socrates explains, the opening of the *Iliad*, down to lines 15 and 16, which he quotes, is presented by Homer in his own person and in his own voice. The passage that begins with line 17, however, which he refrains from quoting, almost as if wishing to avoid impersonating an impersonation of an impersonation, is a direct quotation by Homer of the words of the priest Chryses. This sort of quotation, when one “makes oneself like someone else in voice or in appearance (ἢ κατὰ φωνὴν ἢ κατὰ σχῆμα),” is to imitate that person. The further discussion of imitation (*mimesis*) continues to feature variations of this formulation. According to Socrates, one ought not to imitate the behavior of madmen in word or deed (οὐδὲ ... ἐν λόγοις οὐδὲ ἐν ἔργοις, 396a). Rather, the sensible man, when he comes to the words and deeds (ἐπὶ λέξιιν τινὰ ἢ πράξιιν, 396c) of a good man, will want to imitate them. But in general, imitation is not much approved. Indeed, the more

defective one's character is and the more lacking one is in maturity, the more one is given to imitation, so that the worthless man is likely to tell stories using little else than imitation, both in his verbal expression and in his appearance (φωναῖς τε καὶ σχήμασιν, 397b). For this reason, the purely mimetic mode is the favorite of children and their attendants and of the masses in general.⁸

One might think, therefore, that it would be the purely narrative mode without imitation that most of all met with Socrates' approval. In fact, Socrates is notably diffident in supplying examples of this mode. He says, "I suppose the best place to find it is in the dithyramb,"⁹ and as an illustration, instead of quoting an actual instance, he gives a prose paraphrase – "Since I am not poetically inclined" – of the opening of the *Iliad*, with direct quotations replaced by narratives conveying the gist of what Homer has his characters say.¹⁰ Nor is this the mode of expression that Socrates especially wants to commend for the guardians of his exemplary city. For dispensing with mimesis entirely has the effect of eliminating a potent educational tool, and if one is to strive to be like good men, one must imitate them as fully as possible, that is, in both word and deed. And so the approved method of storytelling will be the mixed mode, with a preponderance of narrative and only a small amount of direct quotation, to be reserved for those places where the poet and performer are called upon to impersonate the good man behaving in an upright and sensible manner (396c–e). In other words, the guardians of Callipolis will be exposed to poetry expressed in the manner of the Homeric epics (396e), but the content will be pruned so as to minimize inappropriate material and, when it is absolutely necessary to include such material, it will be presented in the narrative mode, in order to minimize the level of impersonation. When we get to Book Ten of the *Republic*, however, we find that even this type of poetry, like all forms of poetic expression, must be abandoned, reluctantly but firmly, the way we relinquish a lover whose appeal has faded away (607e). For Plato, poetry is something that, ideally, we will outgrow, something to be replaced by philosophy. Interestingly, however, in the later *Laws*, when philosophy is spoken of as superseding poetry, it is characterized not in terms of the mixed, Homeric mode, but as "the best and most beautiful *tragedy* possible." For, Plato's lawgivers assert, "our entire set of laws is established as an imitation (*mimesis*) of the best and most beautiful way of life, which we for our part claim is in reality the truest (form of) tragedy" (817b). That is, since the ideal laws will imitate only the good and the beautiful, they will adopt the form of imitation that involves the closest identification with that which is imitated, dispensing entirely with the narrative mode, which keeps that which

is imitated, as it were, at arm's length. Appropriately, Plato's *Laws* dispenses with the narrative mode. For Plato, as Ferrari expresses it (1989: 142), "the best sort of imitation is not poetry at all, but philosophy."

We see, then, that as far as Plato is concerned the activities of the tragic actor and those of the rhapsode are not radically different. Rather, they differ only in the degree to which they engage in imitation or impersonation in the form of direct quotation. I believe, however, that Plato is aware that his representation of these activities as differing only in degree is not entirely legitimate, and that he has had to use somewhat devious means to get his readers (and perhaps even himself) to accept it. At any rate, the terminology surrounding the audience for tragic and epic performance that he uses in *Ion*, to which we turn next, suggests a certain degree of uneasiness, if not outright obfuscation.¹¹ Socrates begins his interrogation of *Ion* with some clearly disingenuous flattery (530b), saying that he regularly envies rhapsodes because of their profession, which requires them always to look their best and to spend their time in the company of Homer and other first-rate poets. (Socrates' actual indifference to looking his best is indicated in a number of other contexts by both Xenophon and Plato, most strikingly by Aristodemus' surprise at finding Socrates bathed and shod in Plato's *Symposium*, 174a.) Elsewhere as well, the dialogue emphasizes the sartorial splendor for which rhapsodes were noted and the golden crowns that they might win on the strength of their performances.¹² The sumptuous outfit even figures into Socrates' proof that the rhapsode is not in his right mind during a performance, when he points out the absurdity of someone weeping while standing before an adoring audience and wearing an elaborate costume and golden crown (535d). Despite this insistence on the impressive visual aspect of *Ion* and of rhapsodes in general, Plato maintains the standard terminology whereby the audience at a rhapsodic performance is referred to as "auditors," at least at the start of the dialogue. Early on Socrates proposes that the role of the rhapsode is to "interpret the poet's thought for his listeners (τοῖς ἀκούουσι, 530c)." And, shortly afterward, when Socrates suggests that *Ion* would undoubtedly be only too happy to display his talents by giving an *epideixis*, *Ion* assures him that it would indeed be well worth hearing (ἀκούσαι, 530d) how smartly he has dressed Homer up. Socrates puts off *Ion* for now, saying that he will set aside a time to listen (ἀκροᾶσθαι, 530d) to him perform on another occasion. Later, Socrates tells *Ion* that the reason the god deprives poets and his other servants of their senses is "so that we listeners (ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀκούοντες) will know that it is not they who are producing such worthwhile utterances, but the god himself."¹³

In the course of his demonstration to Ion that poetic excellence comes not through technical competence but by divine dispensation, Socrates enumerates various types of poetic specialization that the Muse inspires: dithyramb, encomium, hyporcheme, epic, and iambic (534c). Conspicuous by their absence are the dramatic forms, tragedy and comedy. Penelope Murray (1996: 119; cf. Rijksbaron 2007: 171–72) suggests that Plato might have omitted these genres “in order to sustain the close identification of poet and performer.” But there seems to be no particular reason why Plato would want to maintain that identification, particularly at this point in the dialogue. Socrates has just introduced the image of the magnet, to illustrate the way in which the inspiration of the Muse is transmitted through the poet to the audience: Just as magnets not only attract iron rings but also impart to those rings the power to attract still other iron rings, even at several removes from the magnet itself (533d–e), so the Muse inspires poets to inspire others. In fact, the image of the magnet seems to have been designed precisely to lead up to the formulation, which Ion approves, that, poets being themselves interpreters, rhapsodes are interpreters of interpreters (535a). Plato has every reason, then, to include mention of tragedy and comedy, the genres par excellence that require the imposition of the performer between the poet and the audience. There must be another reason for Plato’s apparently deliberate omission of tragedy. The omission of comedy and satyr-play may perhaps be explicable on the grounds that Plato regarded them as lacking in dignity and, therefore, as inappropriate objects of inspiration by the Muse. But there is surely no bar to tragedy’s inclusion among the genres over which the Muse presides.

Or is there? As it happens, the drama represents a serious embarrassment to anyone who, like Plato in the *Ion*, speaks of poetry as a product of inspiration by the Muse.¹⁴ For, what is unique, even revolutionary, about the appearance of tragedy is that, for the first time, a Greek poet found himself creating a poetic text that could not invoke the authority of the Muse without violating the very requirements of the genre. Indeed, for the first time a context was created in which the poet could not speak in his or her own voice. At this point a fundamental distinction needs to be observed between tragedy and comedy. In an important article, Oliver Taplin has shown that, with respect to theatrical self-reference, we are dealing with “two genres which are in essence fundamentally different” (1986: 173; see further in Chapter 5, pp. 87–96). Taplin does not mention the poet’s relationship with the Muse in his discussion, but a consideration of that relationship shows that he is right to see an essential distinction between fifth-century comedy and tragedy. For it is permissible, even common, for the comic chorus to invoke the

Muse.¹⁵ The reason for this is the fluidity of the identity of the comic chorus, which can express itself now in the guise of old men from Acharnae, say, or cloud-women, and now as speaking in the person of the poet himself (Dover 1972: 49–53). Indeed, Aristophanes can even represent a named character as speaking as though he is Aristophanes himself (*Acharnians* 377–82, 502–3). The chorus in tragedy, on the other hand, is required to represent, consistently within the context of a single play, Persian elders, say, or Salaminian sailors. A tragedy could, in theory, have a chorus of poets. (While comedies entitled *Poets* were produced by Alexis and Plato Comicus, we do not know whether poets comprised the chorus.) But the poets who made up the tragic chorus could not be represented as having composed the very play in which they appear, both because of the evident absurdity of the notion and because the creation of tragedies was not a collaborative enterprise in fifth-century Greece, as it often was in the time of Beaumont and Fletcher. And so there is no opportunity for the tragic poet to enlist the aid of the Muse in the course of his poem.

Claude Calame begins his essay on “Choral Forms in Aristophanic Comedy” (2004: 157) as follows:

The wholly mimetic mode of tragedy and comedy seems to preclude any direct invocation of the Muse by the poet, the composer and director of the dramatic action which was staged in the theatre. But that does not mean that the Muse, the inspirer of song, was absent from the Attic stage.

Calame immediately refers to the appearance of the Muse in, “for example,” the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, when Aeschylus invokes “the Muse of Euripides” in order to sing a pastiche of Euripidean lyrics. It is true that here, as Calame says, “the tragic Muse is summoned to the stage,” but this is, of course, a comedy and the Muse is both silent and, apparently, dressed in a ridiculous fashion (Dover 1993: 351–52). In fact, when Aeschylus and Euripides are invited to say a prayer before their contest begins in *Frogs*, Aeschylus prays not to the Muse but to Demeter (886), the patron deity of his Eleusinian deme, and Euripides prays to his own personal set of outlandish divinities.¹⁶ The only recorded appearance of a Muse on the tragic stage is in the fourth-century *Rhesus*, a play attributed to Euripides, but there is no hint in the play that this is the Muse who inspired the author of the play in which she appears. Rather, she appears *ex machina* in order to lament the death of her son, the title character of the play. There is only one occasion, in fact, in surviving tragedy on which the chorus is presented as invoking the Muse, namely, in Euripides’ *Trojan Women* (511). As far as I am aware, only Wilhelm Schmid has recognized how

truly bizarre this occurrence is, characterizing it as “a stylistic faux pas unique in Greek tragedy.”¹⁷ The reason this is a faux pas is that the chorus in Euripides’ play is made up not of poets but of Trojan women who have been taken captive, that is, of people who would not ordinarily be expected to invoke the Muse.

This distinction between tragedy and comedy – the one capable of giving voice explicitly to the views of the poet and of enlisting the aid of the Muse in expressing those views, and the other restricted to putting words into the mouths of gods and mythical figures – was not lost on the contentious composers of comic verse, who could use this situation to their own advantage. Aristophanes’ relentless criticisms of Euripides have always seemed to us to be somewhat unfair, but they turn out to be even more unfair when we consider the fact that Euripides was in no position to fight back. Aristophanes undoubtedly recognized that, while Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes’ other comic rivals could and did respond in kind to any comic attacks, the tragic poets could not do so, at least not in the way Greek poets had been accustomed for generations to stand their ground against their rivals. Michael Silk (2000) has shown, I think convincingly, that Aristophanes was unique among comic playwrights in his preoccupation with tragedy in general and with Euripides in particular. But surely what Aristophanes recognized was something the tragic poets themselves must have known all along, namely, that the special potency of the tragic genre was achieved at the expense of the tragic poet’s ability to speak in his own voice, to call upon the Muse in his own name and to assert himself directly in the face of competition from both tragic and comic rivals. That is not to say that tragic poets could not engage creatively with their poetic predecessors, only that they were not able to do so in their own voice. The *Electra* plays of Sophocles and Euripides, for example, implicitly challenge Aeschylus’ treatment of the myth in his *Libation Bearers* – and the later of the two implicitly challenges the earlier – and tragic dramatists occasionally put into the mouth of the chorus or another character comments explicitly directed at the poetry of the past.¹⁸ But these are necessarily framed in the most general of terms.

The inability of the tragic poet to speak in his own voice may also help account for another way in which tragedy stood out from other poetic genres. Considerable scholarship in recent years has emphasized the intimate connection between fifth-century tragedy and Athenian democracy. In one respect, this connection is not surprising, given that tragedy arises more or less simultaneously with the beginnings of radical democracy in Athens and given that tragedies were publicly performed in the context of the Dionysia, a festival in honor of Dionysus organized by the state. In this regard,

there is a notable distinction between Dionysus and Athena, the deity celebrated at the Panathenaea, the festival organized by the state that served, among other things, as the context for performance of Homeric epics: Dionysus is, as E.R. Dodds puts it, “a democratic god” (1960: 127) who removes boundaries and who is frequently depicted in Attic vase paintings surrounded by a throng of revelers, both male and female (Carpenter 1986: 76–97; Isler-Kerényi 2007: 107–57); Athena, on the other hand, is an aloof goddess who is portrayed only in the aristocratic company of other gods or mythical kings and heroes. One may therefore be justified in seeing the Dionysia as, in some sense, a more “popular” or more “democratic” festival (Connor 1989) than the Panathenaea, whose glamorous participants are so memorably memorialized on the Parthenon frieze. What is curious, however, about the Dionysia is that it was specifically the tragic competition that was associated with the trappings of democratic ideology.¹⁹ One might have expected either the dithyramb or comedy to be singled out in this way. After all, the former originated as a cult hymn in honor of Dionysus and was performed in Athens by choruses of 50 men or boys, organized on a tribal basis;²⁰ comedy, with its unbridled outspokenness and its cast of characters that includes ordinary citizens and cheeky slaves, seems more attuned to the interests of “the people” than the heroic stories that are the subject of tragedy. But the poets of both comedy and dithyramb are able to assert their individuality by speaking in their own voice, a voice that poets of both genres use to invoke the Muse.²¹ By contrast, the tragic poet had necessarily to abstract himself from his poetic creation. The audience at the performance of the *Oresteia* could not be confronted directly by words spoken in the person of Aeschylus, nor could the poet or anyone on stage invoke the Muse, with her longstanding associations with such representatives of aristocratic mentality as Homer and Pindar and who, according to Hesiod (*Theogony* 80), confers authority upon kings as well as upon poets. In the absence of the Muse and of an authoritative narrator whose inspiration is derived from the Muse, no more authority resides in the words of one character on the stage than in those of another. Each character needs to establish his or her own authority, which can be done only through the effectiveness of the words spoken. (It has become customary to refer to a concern with this kind of effectiveness as “rhetoric.”) It would seem, then, that the anonymity of tragic performance could serve as an appropriate artistic metaphor for the democratic state, even in the face of the strong creative personalities that the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides convey. Or, rather, the anonymity of tragic performance allowed these strong creative personalities to express themselves safely within the context of the democratic state.

Tragedy, then, poses a unique problem for the poet and for the analyst who wishes to understand the process of poetic composition. From time immemorial, Greek poets had invoked the Muse as providing the authority on which their utterances were based. In the late sixth century a new poetic genre was invented that, by its very nature, removed the possibility of the poet using this traditional element of the craft. We will have occasion to examine further the implications of this development, but at this point it is relevant merely to mention it to show how Plato, who was undoubtedly aware of the issue, skillfully evaded it in the *Ion*. As we have seen, in the early part of the dialogue Plato ignores the dramatic genres when he has Socrates enumerate the various types of poetic composition and he consistently uses the vocabulary of “listening” in connection with the audiences at poetic performances. About halfway through the dialogue, however, immediately after Socrates has secured Ion’s assent to the proposition that rhapsodes are interpreters of interpreters, Plato begins to slip into the conversation the vocabulary of “watching” that is normally reserved for description of the audiences at dramatic performances. Socrates asks Ion (535b–c, in Lamb’s Loeb translation),

When you give a good recitation and specially thrill your audience (τοὺςθεωμένους), either with the lay of Odysseus leaping forth on to the threshold, revealing himself to the suitors and pouring out the arrows before his feet, or of Achilles dashing at Hector, or some part of the sad story of Andromache or of Hecuba, or of Priam, are you then in your senses, or are you carried out of yourself, and does your soul in an ecstasy suppose herself to be among the scenes you are describing, whether they be in Ithaca, or in Troy, or as the poems may chance to place them?

Not only does Plato here, for the first time in the dialogue, refer to Ion’s audience as “spectators,” but he also describes the effect the rhapsode has on those spectators using a word (ἐκπλήξης, here translated “thrill”) that is elsewhere used by Aristotle particularly in association with the strong impression made by tragic recognitions, by Aristophanes as applied to Aeschylus’ tragic technique, and by Gorgias specifically in connection with striking visual sensations.²² Immediately after Ion admits that he does, indeed, take leave of his senses during the performance of such scenes, Socrates asks the rhapsode if he is aware that these performances have the same effect on the greater part of the spectators (τῶν θεατῶν, 535d) that they have on the performer. Ion replies that he is fully aware of the effect he has on his audience, for he *sees* them weeping, with frantic expressions on their faces as they follow what is said (τοῖς λεγομένοις, 535e) in a state of astonishment. The visual terminology is thus emphasized by Plato

reminding us that the performer is not only being watched but also himself keeping an eye on the audience. But, at the same time, Plato highlights the source of the audience's emotional reactions, the words of the poetic text.

Why has Plato gone out of his way to confuse two things that are ordinarily kept separate in Greek thinking, watching dramatic performances and hearing the poet's words as recited by a rhapsode? And why has he done so at just this point in the dialogue? It would seem that Plato wanted to avoid the awkward issue of the tragic poet's problematic relationship with the Muse, so his argument, leading to the conclusion that performers of poetic compositions are in effect interpreters of interpreters, is developed without reference to the creation or performance of dramatic texts. At the same time, Plato intends his view of poetic composition as a matter of inspiration rather than technical skill to apply to the creation of all poetic genres, tragedy included. And so, once he has Socrates secure Ion's assent to the proposition that rhapsodes are interpreters of the works of poets who are inspired by the Muse, he can begin to introduce vocabulary that suggests that rhapsodes are no different from other performers of poetic texts, including tragic actors. He does this by having Socrates refer to the audiences at Ion's performances as "spectators" (535b, d, and e), whereas earlier they had been called "auditors" (530c-d, 534d). In addition, when Socrates sums up the argument at 535e-36a, he says,

Then you are aware that this person, the spectator, is the last of the rings that I was describing as obtaining from one another the power that comes from the magnet? The middle ring is you, the rhapsode and *hypokrites*, while the first is the poet himself.

I have left the word *hypokrites* untranslated, because there is disagreement among scholars as to its exact connotation here. It is the standard word for dramatic "actor" (e.g., Plato, *Symposium* 194b; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.2.9), and Gerald Else (1959) has argued that *hypokrites* arose as a technical theatrical term at the time of the introduction of the second actor early in the career of Aeschylus. That is how Hellmut Flashar (1958: 47 n. 1) takes it here and at 532d, where Socrates disclaims wisdom for himself, telling Ion that wisdom is a quality possessed by "you rhapsodes and *hypokritai* and the poets whose creations you sing." If that is what the word means here, these would be the only places in *Ion* where reference is explicitly made to dramatic performance.²³

But the word *hypokrites* can have other meanings than "dramatic actor," and Plato uses it in the *Timaeus* (72b) to mean "interpreter, diviner." Hermann Koller (1957) regards this sense as reflecting the

word's original meaning, having to do with responding to inquiries, and he considers Plato to be using it here in *Ion* in a way that is explanatory of "rhapsode." Certainty is impossible, but the manner in which Plato expresses himself at 535e–36a makes it slightly more likely that Koller's view is correct. While earlier, at 532d, Socrates had spoken in the plural of "you rhapsodes and *hypokritai*," here he uses the singular, "you, the rhapsode and *hypokrites* (σὺ ῥαψωδὸς καὶ ὑποκριτής)." *Ion* is not a *hypokrites* in the sense of being a dramatic actor but, in the wake of Socrates' demonstration that rhapsodes are interpreters of the words of the poets, it would be appropriate for him to refer to *Ion* as "rhapsode and interpreter." In fact, this would be in keeping with *Ion*'s own understanding of his function as expounder of Homer's meaning, as expressed earlier in the dialogue when *Ion* had said that he can "say finer things about Homer" than anyone else (530c–d; cf. Velardi 1989: 25–31). Thus it is possible to account for both occurrences of *hypokrites* in the dialogue without requiring us to understand that Plato is referring to dramatic performance. But, at the same time, the use of this word, whose most common meaning in Plato's day is "actor in a dramatic production," combined with the introduction of visual terminology in reference to the audience of rhapsodic performances, is Plato's devious way of sliding almost imperceptibly from talking about epic recitation specifically to talking about performance of poetic works in general.

There is yet another reason why Plato is interested in obscuring the distinction between the drama and other forms of poetic creation and another reason he wishes to restrict his use of visual terminology. The tradition associating the Archaic poet with the Muse made that association primarily in auditory terms. When Homer invokes the help of the Muses before embarking on the Catalogue of Ships, he contrasts their superior wisdom with the ignorance of mortals, we who "merely hear the report and know nothing" (*Iliad* 2.484–86; cf. Ford 1992: 60–61). The verb "know" (ἴδμεν) comes from the same root as the verb "see" (ἰδεῖν) and, appropriately, epic poets often lack, or are represented as lacking, the sense of sight. The poet of the "Homeric" *Hymn to Apollo* (172) refers to himself as a blind man from the island of Chios, and Homer portrays the bard Demodocus as having had his sight taken from him by the Muse, presumably as the price for the gift of song (*Odyssey* 8.63–64; cf. Buxton 1980: 27–30; Graziosi 2002: 138–42). And when Hesiod, at the start of his *Theogony*, reports his personal encounter with the Muses, he quotes the words that he heard them speak to him (26–28), but he gives no indication that he has seen them (Dodds 1951: 131 n. 86). The authority of the Muses, of course, is unquestioned – although they do tell Hesiod that they are as capable of relaying falsehoods as the truth – but that authority is

traditionally associated with the auditory sense and, as we have seen, what is heard is regarded as less trustworthy than what is seen. With the introduction of tragedy and the poet's inability, imposed by the genre, to conjure the voice of the Muse, the audience was now in a position to see for itself what the bard had only been able to convey, at second hand, in words. Tragedy, then, was able to claim a degree of authority that even Homer and Hesiod could not match. But it was precisely this authority that Plato wished to seize for himself and for his philosophy, which is thoroughly imbued with visual terminology (Nightingale 2004). It is, therefore, conducive to Plato's program to play down the visual impact of the theater and to represent the dramatist as merely another type of poet, who is blindly drawn by the irrational magnetism of the Muse.²⁴

In *The Well-Read Muse*, Peter Bing has documented what he calls the "devaluation of the Muses" (1988: 19 n. 20) in the fourth century and later, which he attributes to the fact that poetry was increasingly encountered in written rather than in oral form. The Muses, after all, are the daughters of Mnemosyne, and their primary role is to serve as the poet's external memory banks (Havelock 1963: 100). Once writing begins to take over that function, it is alleged, the value of the Muses begins to diminish. But the Muses preserve not only a memory of the past; they also allow the poet access to events that he cannot have witnessed himself, either because they took place long ago or because they involve things that are normally invisible to human intelligence, like the interactions of the gods. Tragedy, however, has no need of recalling the past or of asking for assistance in gaining access to the divine realm: For the audience of Sophocles' *Ajax*, the Trojan War is not a distant event but is occurring at the present time; and the audience of Euripides' *Trojan Women* can witness the conversation between Athena and Poseidon occurring, unmediated, before their very eyes. To invoke the Muse would be to dispel the very illusion on whose immediacy the effectiveness of tragedy depends. By disallowing explicit acknowledgment of the Muse's influence, tragedy invested the poet himself with an extraordinary power, a power that traditionally was felt to emanate from a divine entity. But none of this could be acknowledged openly and directly. Instead, the characters on stage had to be granted the linguistic skill and rhetorical sophistication that previously had been the prerogative of the divinely inspired poet, becoming more and more self-consciously rhetorical in the process.

¹ In fact, more than half the verses of the Homeric poems are in direct quotation: Schmid and Stählin (1929–1948, vol. 1: 92 n. 7), Griffin (1986), and de Jong (2005: 618).

² I have tried to be charitable to Aristotle by translating ἀπαγγελίαν εἶναι (1449b11) in this way, despite the awkwardness of the expression. Else's translation (1957: 203), "its [*sc.* epic's] being a narrative," which reflects the apparently universal understanding of the text, makes this inconsistent with 1448a21, where epic is only a partially narrative genre.

³ Compare *Poetics* 1462a11–12, "tragedy does its work even without movement (performance), *like the epic*," from the translation in Else (1957: 639, with emphasis added).

⁴ Else (1957: 263). He aptly compares (n. 149) *De anima* 1.1, "The soul is, as it were, the guiding principle (ἀρχή) of living creatures."

⁵ See the excellent comments in Hurwit (1985: 169–72).

⁶ δι' ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, 394c; compare Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b26, δι' ἀπαγγελίας.

⁷ For navigating the complexities of the issues and the extensive literature on the subject, I recommend the stylish 1989 Ferrari or the 2002 Ford.

⁸ 397d. Similarly, at *Laws* 658d, the visitor from Athens says that children prefer comedy, while those women who are educated, young men, and just about the whole of the masses prefer tragedy (P. Murray 1996: 182).

⁹ 394c. This statement is a bit puzzling since, as it happens, direct quotation appears prominently in the surviving fragments of Bacchylides' dithyrambs (e.g., 15.50–63, 17.20–46, 52–66, 74–80, and 24.1–12), and one dithyramb (18) in fact consists of nothing but direct quotation. Perhaps Plato considers direct quotation on the part of a chorus of 50 to be an impersonation of a different order from quotation by a single rhapsode or actor.

¹⁰ 393d–94b. This is an early instance of the rhetorical exercise known as "metathesis," for which see de Jonge (2005, with further bibliography).

¹¹ Velardi (1989: 14) notes the fluctuation in the terminology, but does not attempt to account for it.

- ¹² 530d, 541c; compare the emphasis that Herodotus accords the magnificent regalia in his telling of the story of Arion (1.24). For rhapsodes' costumes, see West (1992: 54–55); for the visual evidence from vase painting, see Bundrick (2005: 166).
- ¹³ 534d; cf. Cavarero (2002: 53) for the degree to which this passage emphasizes the auditory aspects.
- ¹⁴ Whether Plato is in fact seriously committed to the idea that poets, rhapsodes, and actors are divinely inspired is, of course, another matter, for which see Levin (2001: 146–48). For the presence of the Muses in early Greek poetry, see Maehler (1963), P. Murray (1981), Granger (2007: 406–11), and Morrison (2007: 73–90).
- ¹⁵ Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 665, *Peace* 775, 816, *Birds* 737, and *Frogs* 674, 876 (cf. 229). Because of the absence of context, we do not know who invokes the Muse at Cratinus frag. 237 Kassel–Austin, Hermippus frag. 63 K–A, or Alexis frag. 166 K–A.
- ¹⁶ According to the lone manuscript of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, the tragic poet Agathon invokes the Muse in line 107; our argument here confirms Fraenkel's demonstration (1962: 111–13; cf. Austin and Olson 2004: 91) that this reading cannot be correct.
- ¹⁷ Schmid and Stählin (1929–1948, vol. 3: 480 n. 2). An attempt is made to make sense of the chorus' invocation of the Muse here in Sansone (2009). Lada-Richards (2002: 84) cites this passage, “for example,” as a case where “the members of a tragic Chorus may cast themselves in the role of the Poet.”
- ¹⁸ Sometimes, indeed, the word used by Euripides for “poetry” is the Greek word *μοῦσα*, indistinguishable except in the spelling of modern texts, from the name of the Muse: *Alcestis* 962, *Medea* 421, *Hippolytus* 452, and *Bacchae* 563.
- ¹⁹ See most recently and most persuasively P. Wilson (2009), with references to earlier literature. Rhodes (2003, 2011) is, however, skeptical.
- ²⁰ For the democratic character of the dithyramb, see Zimmermann (1992: 35–38).

²¹ For comedy, see note 15, this chapter; for dithyramb, which survives largely in the form of fragments, see Bacchylides 15.47, Pindar, frag. 70a.14 Snell–Maehler. In frag. 70b.23–25, Pindar says, “I have been chosen and set up by the Muse as a herald of wise verses for Greece,” in the translation of Andrew Barker (1984: 60).

²² See Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454a4, 1455a17; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 962, with parallels at Aeschylus test. 120.962 Radt; and Gorgias, *Helen* 16, with the important comments by Segal (1962: 131). In Plato’s *Symposium* (198b–c), Socrates reacts to the dazzling speech of Agathon, which Socrates says reminded him of Gorgias, by saying, “Who wouldn’t be thrilled (τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐξεπλάγη) listening to it?” For *ekplexis* and tragedy, see Lada (1996: 399–400).

²³ Flashar sees a “clear” reference to tragedy in Socrates’ mention of “chorus members and chorus trainers and assistant chorus trainers” at 536a, but “chorus members” (e.g., Pindar, *Pythian* 12.27) and “chorus trainers” (e.g., Antiphon 6.13) certainly, and “assistant chorus trainers” presumably, could be found in contexts having to do with nondramatic choruses.

²⁴ This paragraph is heavily indebted to Cavarero (2002).

“It’s Counterpoint,” He Countered, and Pointed

The invention of tragedy, then, represents a novelty in that, for the first time, a Greek poet found himself creating a work that could not incorporate an invocation of the Muse as an assertion of the poet’s authority and a claim on access to a reliable and truthful source. From the perspective of the audience as well, of course, tragedy provides something new and unprecedented, the illusion that Agamemnon and Medea, Apollo and Athena are visually as well as audibly present to the audience, the latter now thought of and spoken of as “viewers” rather than “listeners.” It may seem that too much has already been made of what is, after all, obvious to everyone, namely that the drama has a visual component that is not present in other poetic forms. In fact, I should like to return to this matter, first, because I am convinced that the revolutionary character of the addition of this particular visual component has not been sufficiently appreciated; and, second, because I believe that recognition of this revolutionary character allows us to understand the immediate and profound effects that the invention of drama in late-sixth-century BC Attica had in other areas of Greek culture, especially the development of a formal rhetoric. But first we need to understand the nature of this visual component that is essential to the drama. All Greek poetry of the Archaic and Classical periods was composed for performance. That is, the poet’s verses were intended to be delivered orally by a single performer or by a chorus who could, naturally, be seen as well as heard by the audience. The story of Arion, as we have seen (in Chapter 2, p. 28), gives an indication of the prominence of costume in the performance of even nondramatic poetry. And this is confirmed by the considerable expense willingly incurred by Athenian *choregoi* in the outfitting of dithyrambic as well as dramatic choruses (P. Wilson 2000: 86–95) and by the envy ironically expressed by Socrates of the rhapsode Ion, both for his acquaintance with the poetry of Homer and for his professional requirement of dressing in fancy regalia (Plato, *Ion*

530b). Nor is the visual aspect of poetic performance confined to the elaborate costume worn by the performer: As Ion proudly tells Socrates, he creates his effect on his audience as well by his gestures and, when appropriate, with his tears and by displaying other visible symptoms of emotion (535c). In doing this, Ion is clearly *enhancing* by visual means the auditory message conveyed by the words (and the music) of the poet.

John Herington, in *Poetry into Drama*, has documented the extent to which rhapsodic performance and the performance of Archaic lyric poetry involved mimetic impersonation. He has even gone so far as to characterize early Greek poetry as “almost, indeed, a kind of drama-before-drama” (1985: x), claiming that tragedy was merely a hybrid form compounded of the various elements already in existence before the birth of Aeschylus. For Herington, the novelty of the drama rested in the unique combination of these various elements (10), which produced in the audience an eager anticipation that “each Dionysia might reveal ... for the first time ever an Orestes, say, or a Memnon, or a Niobe, or an Oedipus, who was no longer a mere mechanical component [!] in a famous story but who breathed, walked, and, above all, spoke for himself” (136). That is, Herington takes the breathing, the walking, and the speaking in character as merely further *enhancements* by visual means of the auditory message conveyed by the words (and the music) of the poet.

For Herington and, I believe, for many others, the addition of costumes, masks,¹ movement, and the other peculiar features of the drama serve primarily to further the illusion that the performer is the character whose role he has adopted. But the drama is not a series of animated soliloquies. Rather, the essence of the drama is interaction between characters on stage. That being the case, what the added visual component contributes is not enhancement but what I should like to refer to as “counterpoint.” We had occasion in Chapter 3 (pp. 39–40) to consider the opening scene of the *Iliad*, with its momentous confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon. We saw there that the requirements of the narrative mode of presentation meant that the single performer, a rhapsode like Plato’s Ion, would have to enact sequentially the roles of the two antagonists (in addition to reciting the words of the Homeric narrator). All eyes – and all ears – will have been trained on the lavishly outfitted person of Ion, whose every effort will have been directed at spiriting the minds of his audience away from the here and now, transporting them to the distant coast of the Troad and the remote time of the Trojan War. The drama, of course, by contrast makes the here Troy and the now the 10th year of the war, bringing Achilles and Agamemnon before our very eyes, not sequentially but *at the very same time*. It is this that fundamentally

distinguishes the drama from narrative forms like epic and choral lyric, indeed, from all other “literary” forms. We may be moved to tears by watching and listening to Ion as he enacts the meeting between Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6, or between Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* 24. But no matter how skillful his performance, we are aware that we are watching and listening to one performer, who is addressing his words and his gestures to us, now in the person of Hector, now in that of Andromache, now in that of the narrator, and so on. Our eyes and ears are corroborating witnesses to *the same* sequential narrative. And, as we saw in the case of the opening of the *Iliad* (Chapter 3, p. 40), the movements and gestures that the rhapsode uses to enhance the impact of the narrative in fact have the effect of calling attention to the single point from which the entire aesthetic experience emanates, the person of the performer, whose words and actions blend together the personalities of the narrator and of the various participants in the action.

The dramatist, however, enlists our eyes for what may be regarded as a more analytic purpose, to provide what I have referred to as “counterpoint,” purposely adopting a musical term. Ancient Greek music, in common with European music in general before the Middle Ages, was monophonic, consisting of a single melodic line (Neubecker 1977: 97–98). That melodic line could be enhanced by a further musical accompaniment, but there is no evidence that the accompaniment was anything other than a support for, or at most an elaboration of, the basic melody (Barker 1995; West 1992: 205–7). Polyphony in the modern sense of a composition in which two or more “voices” sound simultaneously is unknown to the ancient Greeks. Presumably a six-part fugue or the finale of Mozart’s Jupiter Symphony would have struck the ancient Greek ear as an incoherent cacophony. We are now capable, because musicians like Bach and Mozart have taught us, of listening to and appreciating the complexity of polyphonic music, but the experience of musical counterpoint was foreign to ancient audiences. Similarly, I suggest, before the introduction of the drama as a serious type of literary expression, the ancient Greeks were accustomed only to literary forms with a single focus of attention, forms like epic recitation or choral lyric, in which shifts of perspective from one character to another could occur only sequentially. So, for example, in the first book of the *Iliad*, the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon is presented in a series of direct quotations, in which the performer alternates between impersonation of each of the disputants, interspersed with words spoken in the person of the poet, identifying each speaker, describing their actions, and so on. But, just as the invention of musical polyphony was a revolutionary development in Western music, contributing a depth

and complexity previously unknown and requiring the development of new cognitive skills, so the entrance of the second actor onto the Attic stage represents a revolution in the way in which literary expression is both created and experienced. As we have seen, the audience in the theater, unlike the audience for other types of verbal performances, is referred to as a collection of “spectators” (θεαταί), seated in “viewing stands” (θέατρον). What they saw on stage was not only the character who happened to be speaking at any given moment – Clytaemestra, say, or Jason – but also the character to whom he or she was speaking. Whether this latter character – Agamemnon or Medea – gestured or reacted visibly in any way to the words of the speaker makes little difference. The fact is that, for the first time, the spectators were confronted *simultaneously* with the sounds of one character’s words and the sight of the person to whom the words were addressed. This wholly novel occurrence in effect compelled the spectator to consider, and even to speculate about, the likely reactions of Agamemnon and Medea to the words of their interlocutors. The visible presence of these characters on stage, listening to the words addressed to them, makes it almost inevitable that we in the audience, overhearing those words, will make some mental effort to frame a response to them.

This is radically different from the experience of seeing and hearing Ion the rhapsode enacting the confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon. In that case, the two antagonists are present to our ears and minds only one at a time. While we are hearing Agamemnon’s words we are not thinking about Achilles’ reaction to them, because we assume that we will be told subsequently what that reaction is, either in the form of narration or through the direct quotation of Achilles’ response. In contrast, characters in tragedy normally address their words to the chorus or to other characters,² so that tragedy, unlike other literary forms, is equipped by its very nature with a potential counterargument to its every assertion. Of course, not every interaction on the tragic stage is as confrontational as that between Agamemnon and Clytaemestra or that between Jason and Medea. But the “counterpoint” provided by the second (and later the third) tragic actor need not take the form of opposition or open conflict. In fact, one of the clearest markers of the distinction between the narrative and the dramatic mode is the way in which each conveys a lack of response on the part of one of the characters. In narrative, a character’s silence can only be conveyed in words, as when Homer tells us that a speech was met with stunned silence (*Iliad* 3.95 and elsewhere), or when Odysseus recounts to the Phaeacians his encounter in the land of the dead with Ajax: Odysseus quotes for his hearers the words he addressed to his deceased rival, and then says,

“So I spoke, but he made no reply to me and he went off to join the other souls of the dead” (*Odyssey* 11.563–64). This is a famous – and, one is tempted to say, “dramatic” – incident that was memorably imitated by Virgil in his depiction of the encounter between Aeneas and Dido in the *Aeneid* (6.450–74). Both Ajax and Dido silently turn their backs on their hopeful interlocutors and immediately walk away, into the mists of the underworld and out of the narrative poem that they had inhabited. The drama, however, can use a character’s silence in a very different way and can direct the audience’s attention to a silent character over a prolonged period.³

It is a mark of Aeschylus’ dramatic genius that he, who is credited by some ancient authorities as the man who first introduced the second actor and can therefore legitimately be considered the inventor of the drama, already fully appreciated the potential that the new genre presented. Indeed, Aeschylus was famous in antiquity for his use of silent characters for dramatic effect. In Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, “Euripides” accuses his dramatic rival of engaging in fraud and deception (ἐξηπάτα), by bringing before his audiences (τοὺς θεατάς) characters like Achilles and Niobe, sitting in sullen silence for long periods with their faces covered up (909–15). We will have occasion in this book to discuss the question of the meaning of “deception” (ἀπάτη) in connection with our discussion of the relationship between Aeschylus and Gorgias. For now, however, it is worth asking why “Euripides” criticizes Aeschylus’ use of silent characters specifically in terms of deception and as an example of the older dramatist’s supposed role as “con artist and trickster” (ἀλαζών καὶ φέναξ, 909). Now, it is not at all unusual – indeed, it is fairly conventional – for poets to have falsehood and deceit attributed to them, particularly by rival poets. In fact, Solon’s dictum “Bards spread many lies” became proverbial.⁴ It is, however, normally the poet’s *words* that are said to be false and deceitful, for which reason Ludwig Radermacher, in his commentary on *Frogs* (1921: 275), notes that the metaphors of trickery and deceit continue to be found in the works of the rhetorical theorists, and he quotes Dionysius of Halicarnassus to the effect that the words of a clever man can deceive every listener. But here it is not words that are at issue but silence, and it is only the dramatic poet who can engage in deception through silence, for reasons that Aristophanes seems to have understood and that are clarified in the further discussion in *Frogs* between Dionysus and “Euripides.” Dionysus, who, as the god of the theater, has a professional interest in being deceived, claims that he rather enjoyed the lengthy Aeschylean silences, saying that they gave him no less pleasure than the current crop of tragic chatterboxes.⁵ “Euripides” replies by saying that Dionysus only enjoyed the spectacle of Aeschylus’ silent characters

because he is a rube and is, therefore, easily taken in, to which Dionysus naïvely responds, “So why did the character act that way?”⁶ The answer that “Euripides” gives is illuminating, both for us and for the god: “To con the spectator into waiting expectantly for Niobe to say something.”⁷ The lyric or narrative poet can only deceive us by *saying* something that is not in fact true. He or she cannot remain silent and expect the audience to wait more than a second or two for what is, inevitably, only a continuation of what preceded the silence. The dramatist, however, could require a character to keep quiet for any length of time, which apparently delighted Aristophanes’ Dionysus, at least until Euripides divulged the trade secret, namely, that dramatists use silent characters to arouse and manipulate the expectations of an easily deceived audience.

In his article “Aeschylean Silences and Silences in Aeschylus,” Oliver Taplin distinguishes between “significant” silences and silences that are “accidental” or are merely “the result of technical expediency” (1972: 76). The former are marked by having attention explicitly drawn to them in the text, whereas the latter are a normal, even necessary, feature of dramatic technique, since “not everyone in a play can talk all the time” (57). Taplin continues (57),

Indeed in most plays most of the characters are silent most of the time. But routine and necessary silences are not as a rule of any dramatic significance. No attention is drawn to them, and we do not notice them.

It is surprising that Taplin, who has done more than any other scholar in my lifetime to clarify the conventions of the ancient Greek stage, simply takes for granted that what “we” do not notice also went unnoticed by Aeschylus’ audiences. The reason we do not notice Philostrate’s silence in Act I, scene 1 of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is that we are the beneficiaries of two and a half millennia of theater history; we are accustomed to the crowded stage of the Elizabethan theater and the Broadway musical. Aeschylus’ audiences, on the other hand, were not (yet) used to the kind of “counterpoint” that the invention of the drama introduced. They were used to watching and hearing a single bard performing or a chorus singing in unison. Unlike us, they could not help asking themselves, regardless of whether attention was explicitly drawn to his presence, when this other performer was going to break his silence, what he was going to say when his turn came, and even whether or not he was likely to speak at all.

One of the silences that Taplin discusses, briefly, is that of the queen mother in Aeschylus’ *Persians*, after the messenger has announced the disastrous defeat of the Persian forces at Salamis. He

notes that the queen's "dignity and her quick return to composure contrast with the abandoned lament of the chorus," but he also claims that her "silence receives no attention while it lasts," repeating himself in the same paragraph: "her silence is not remarked while it lasts" (1972: 80; similarly Rosenmeyer 1982: 191). The reason, according to Taplin, that the queen's silence goes unnoticed (until she herself calls attention to it retrospectively by breaking her silence with the words, "I have been silent this long time ...") is that "comparable technical silences are found throughout Greek tragedy" (1972: 80 n. 69). What Taplin does not point out, and what cannot be emphasized too much or too often, is that Aeschylus' *Persians* is the earliest work of dramatic literature now in existence. It was created for production in the early spring of 472 BC, and there is no way of knowing how soon before that date the second actor was introduced to the Attic stage. If, as everyone seems to acknowledge, following Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449a15–17), it was Aeschylus himself who was responsible for the innovation, the second actor was introduced less than a generation before the production of *Persians*, since Aeschylus' career did not begin until the early years of the fifth century. That means that there were members of the audience for *Persians* – not to mention the poet himself – who had grown up witnessing only a kind of proto-dramatic performance in which no one but the chorus and a single actor had singing or speaking roles. The second actor was a recent innovation and had a definite function. That function was not to stand by mutely awaiting orders to be carried out in silence, in the manner of Philostrate, who does not speak until Act V. The function of the second actor was to speak or sing, in response to the first actor, the chorus, or both. In the case of *Persians*, the character who is initially silent after the messenger's announcement is no less a personage than the mother of the ruler of the world's lone superpower and the widow of the previous ruler. Whether she speaks or holds her tongue, she stands before us as an object of awe and curiosity. The announcement by the messenger, although formally addressed to the chorus of Persian elders (Broadhead 1960: xli–xlii), is of obvious interest to her, both as queen and as mother, since the words "the entire host is lost" (255) could well imply the death of her son. We have heard her speak before, in her extended encounter with the chorus (159–245), so we know that she has a speaking part. Indeed, her role was played by the protagonist, perhaps by Aeschylus himself (Kaimio 1999: 50). We know that she is profoundly emotionally involved in what the messenger has to say. In fact, her personal investment in the messenger's words is at least as great as that of the chorus. We are certain, therefore, that she will break her silence; what we do not know is whether she will speak or sing, or whether her response will

be hysterical or restrained. We are, as Aristophanes' "Euripides" puts it, conned into waiting expectantly for the queen to say something. (Notice, also, that we cannot help referring to the Athenian man on the stage as the queen of the Persians, who has a deep personal interest in the fate of "her son," Xerxes.)

It is, of course, the case that the silence of one dramatic character while another character is speaking is a simple necessity of the genre. What is suggested here is that this enforced silence was a radical novelty and that Aeschylus (and later Sophocles and Euripides) and the Athenian audience were only beginning to learn how to respond to it. The audience, as we have seen and as Aristophanes points out, was beguiled into anticipating what the silent character was going to say, if and when that character chose to break into speech. Aeschylus, for his part, recognized the potential for emotional and intellectual engagement that this novel feature of the genre he developed allowed him to exploit. An anecdote that seems to derive from Aeschylus' contemporary, Ion of Chios (frag. 108 Leurini 1992; Jennings 2007: 338), illustrates the dramatist's understanding of the contrast between the restraint involved in the performer's silence and the profound emotional response of the audience: Once, while watching a boxing match at the Isthmian Games and seeing a competitor receive a punch to the face, he nudged his companion Ion and said, "What a thing is discipline! The spectators (τὸ θεῶν) cry out, but the man who was struck keeps quiet."

In keeping with this appreciation of its potency, Aeschylus was able to employ silence to devastating effect, in ways that could never previously be contemplated by practitioners of any literary genre. As has long been recognized, the effect produced on the audience by the first words of Pylades in *The Libation Bearers* and of Cassandra in *Agamemnon* is profound and supplies clear evidence of Aeschylus' brilliance as a dramatist. Pylades has been before the eyes of the audience since the opening of the play, and he was addressed directly by Orestes at line 20. Because of his silence at that point and ever since, as well as the tragic convention of allowing characters with speaking roles to be accompanied by mute companions and attendants, the audience is deceived into the comfortable assumption that the role of Pylades is played by a nonspeaking extra. Therefore, when he breaks his silence by speaking the only three lines he has in the play (900–902), reminding Orestes of Apollo's oracles and the oaths that have been sworn, "the lines gain extra weight and impact precisely because Pylades has never spoken before" (Taplin 1972: 80). Taplin immediately goes on to say that "it is not the silence which is important, but the ending of it." The existence of the silence, however, is the sine qua non of its being broken, and such silences are the

exclusive feature of the dramatic form. Even more impressive is the silence (and its ending) of Cassandra, whose refusal to respond to the repeated direct address of both Clytaemestra and the chorus (*Agamemnon* 1035, 1039, 1047, 1053–54, 1059) is eventually attributed to the possibility that, as a foreigner, she may not even understand the language being spoken (1060–61). Alex Garvie (1986: 275) has pointed out that the difference between Cassandra and Pylades is that the spectators (and, it should be noted, the characters on stage) expect the former to speak, whereas it comes as a surprise to the audience when the latter does not maintain his silence. In either case, it is the audience's expectations that are being manipulated by the poet, expectations that can be aroused in this particular way only on the dramatic stage.⁸

There are two reasons for the uniqueness of the drama in this regard, one having to do with space and one having to do with time, one that disperses the audience's focus of attention and one that concentrates it. As we have seen, in the drama, unlike in any other literary genre, there can be more than one thing going on at a time; the audience is frequently required to process visually and auditorily the words and gestures of one character while simultaneously registering the response to those words and gestures as manifested by the gestures – or even by the absence of responsive gestures – on the part of another character on stage. This is the “counterpoint” that I have referred to and to which we will return presently. It is a feature unique to the drama because the characters of the piece can be present before the audience simultaneously at different points within the theatrical space.⁹ At the same time, by eliminating the role of the narrator and having the action unfold directly before the eyes and ears of the audience, the drama tends to confine itself to a single, linear progression in time, in contrast to the narrative mode, in which the narrator can stop the flow of time to supply flashbacks (e.g., *Odyssey* 19.392–466) or to describe an event occurring at another place at the same time (*Odyssey* 4.847).¹⁰ Of course, flashbacks and simultaneous occurrences *can* be dramatized, but only after the audience has become so accustomed to the conventions of the stage that it can readily entertain the stage direction “Another part of the forest.”

On the fifth-century Attic stage, the plot can progress in only one direction. And this, of course, is what gives the drama its immediacy and its feeling of inexorable momentum. When the chorus of Argive elders dithers in response to their king's cries from within the palace in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (1344–71), their hesitation engages and frustrates us precisely because this is not an event that is described by a narrator as having taken place at some time in the past. The murder of the king is occurring *now*, behind *this* wall that we see before us.

And since it is occurring in the present, there is *still* time for the chorus to intervene. By forgoing the narrator's power to, as it were, stop time and pause the action, the drama makes the time in which the dramatized events take place identical with the time experienced by the audience in the theater. A particularly clear illustration of the difference in this regard between the narrative mode and the dramatic is available to us in a comparison of two scenes, one from the *Odyssey* and one from Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, the latter of which was undoubtedly shaped by the former. Several critics have noted the similarities in setting and situation between the opening scene of Sophocles' play and Homer's narrative of Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops. Angus Bowie provides a useful summary of the main points (Bowie 1997: 60; cf. J.F. Davidson 1995: 26–30; Garner 1990: 147–48; Rehm 2002: 146):

In the episodes of Polyphemus and Philoctetes, the initial situation is the same: Odysseus confronts the cave of a dangerous figure with a companion or companions chosen for the occasion. Each figure lives in a similar cave: Polyphemus' is "on the edge of the land (ἐσχάτῃ), by the sea, tall, and overshadowed by laurels" (9.182 f.); Philoctetes' is also on the ἐσχάτια (144), "on the shore in an overarching rock" (272) and "high up" (29; cf. 1000 f.); both are said to lack the tracks of mankind (9.116 ff. ~ 2, 221, 300 ff.). Both are empty of their inhabitant (9.216 f. ~ 31), and contain a bed (9.427 f. ~ 33) and rustic cup (9.346 ~ 35 f.). Polyphemus and Philoctetes are both markedly different from mankind, neither is involved in agriculture (9.108–11 ~ 708 f.; Philoctetes has not tasted wine for ten years, 714 f.), and both are essentially cannibalistic (cf. 957 f.). In each case, trickery is essential. ...

All of these – with the exception of the imputation of cannibalism to Philoctetes, which I find difficult to swallow – can legitimately be regarded as significant similarities. But, apart from supplying new and unneeded support for the uncontested claim that Sophocles was familiar with the Homeric poems, it has not been made entirely clear what these reminiscences are significant of. Bowie's contention, that they "introduce greater complication" to the already questionable view that "Alcibiades and the political world of Athens are thus filtered not only through the myth of Philoctetes but also through epic stories" (61), casts more fog than light on the matter. In particular, some of the similarities are drawn from points in the play much later than the time of "the initial situation," so that what seems to be at issue is a vague similarity in the setting and in the characters of the two cave dwellers, all of which colors the audience's perceptions, according to Bowie, of the supposed homology between the action on

stage and Athenian political events in and shortly before 409 BC.

If we look, however, at the opening scene of *Philoctetes* in sequence, rather than as a text to be read and reread, that is, in the order in which the sights and sounds of the play are brought to the attention of the audience in the theater, we will have a better idea of what exactly the playwright is up to and how the dramatic mode differs from the narrative in the presentation of relatively similar scenarios. The play opens with two men, accompanied by one or more attendants (45–48), coming on the scene. The older man speaks first (1–25). He will be recognized as Odysseus by different members of the audience at different times, depending on their familiarity with earlier versions of the story, but in any event by line 26, when the younger man addresses him by name.¹¹ The younger man is Neoptolemus, whom Odysseus addresses by name and patronymic at line 4. Odysseus' first words identify the location as the uninhabited island of Lemnos (1–2), where Odysseus had some years before abandoned the invalid Philoctetes (5). Odysseus identifies for Neoptolemus (and, of course, for the audience) the opening in the stage building as the entrance to a cave where Philoctetes had taken up residence, and he asks the younger man to check cautiously and see whether he can find evidence that the cave is still occupied (15–23). At this point, what has been established, beyond the general situation and the identity of the location and the characters, is a sense of danger connected with the inhabitant of the onstage cave, whose enmity toward Odysseus has been conveyed by Odysseus' reluctance to reconnoiter himself. The intimations of danger and the resulting unsettled sense of anticipation may have been augmented in the minds of some members of the audience as a consequence of their recollection of the similar situation in the *Odyssey*, but for the most part the feeling of anxious expectation is aroused by Odysseus' knowledge of Philoctetes' hostility toward him, based on his familiarity with the situation from several years before, which he conveys to Neoptolemus in his opening speech.

The sense of anticipation is conveyed differently in the narrative mode, as we can see from Book Nine of the *Odyssey*. To begin with, the narrator there is Odysseus himself, recounting his adventures to Alcinous and his Phaeacian hosts. That is, his audience in the text and the external audience listening to Homer or Ion perform the poem know from the start that Odysseus has successfully overcome whatever danger was posed by the inhabitant of the cave. The danger, that is, to Homer's Odysseus lies in the past, whereas the danger to Odysseus and Neoptolemus in Sophocles' play is still to come, both for the characters on stage and for the audience in the theater. But how do Homer's two audiences know that the unknown cave dweller poses a threat to Odysseus and his men? Since the *Odyssey* is a narrative

text, Homer (or rather Odysseus, who is the narrator at this point) can engage in what narratologists refer to as “prolepsis” and “analepsis,” or foreshadowing and flashback. And so Odysseus can share with his audience his subsequent knowledge concerning the character and present whereabouts of the inhabitant of the cave (*Odyssey* 9.186–92, in Lattimore’s 1967 translation):

Inside

there lodged a monster of a man, who now was herding
the flocks at a distance away, alone, for he did not range with
others, but stayed away by himself; his mind was lawless,
and in truth he was a monstrous wonder made to behold,
not 190
like a man, an eater of bread, but more like a wooded
peak of the high mountains seen standing away from the others.

Odysseus could only infer later that Polyphemos had been herding his flocks and only later did he learn, to his cost, that the Cyclops had a lawless mind and a monstrous body. Somewhat improbably, Odysseus shortly claims that he had a premonition that he “would encounter a man who was endowed with great strength, and wild, with no true knowledge of laws or any good customs” (9.214–15). Later still, Odysseus repeats what he subsequently inferred, that Polyphemos was at the time herding his flocks (217), and what he eventually came to recognize, that it would have been better if he had listened to his companions (228) and left before the Cyclops returned home.¹²

These shifts in temporal focus have been among the essential tools of good storytellers – and Homer’s Odysseus is a very good storyteller indeed – from time immemorial, and they were of course well known to the Attic dramatists, who often include past-tense narratives in the form of extended messenger speeches in their plays. But the drama itself is not a narrative form. It does not, for the most part, rely on storytelling but on enactment, which requires the dramatist to develop a new set of tools. In the case of *Philoctetes*, we will be able to see how Sophocles uses those tools by continuing our comparison with the Homeric scene: In response to Odysseus’ request, Neoptolemus explores the cave and reports back to Odysseus, confirming that it is at present empty (31). The two men are now in the position of Odysseus and his companions in the *Odyssey*, namely, that of waiting for the inhabitant of the cave to return. But, while Homer’s adventurers enter the cave and wait (9.231–33), Odysseus and Neoptolemus are required by the conventions of the outdoor Athenian theater to remain at the mouth of the cave.¹³ This, in fact, turns out to provide the audience with a source of suspense that is not available to authors of narrative works. In Homer there is, and can be, no doubt as to the

direction from which Polyphemos will come when, eventually, he returns to his cave. We have not been told that the Cyclops' cave has only one entrance, but we have no reason to assume otherwise. Most caves have only one entrance, and Homer's audience has been given no grounds for believing that Polyphemos will enter his cave in any way other than the one used by Odysseus and his companions. So, when Polyphemos' return home is described, no attention is paid to the location of his entry. All Odysseus says is that "we ate and sat waiting for him inside, until he came home" (9.232–33). Instead, attention is drawn entirely to the size and strength of the monster, who confirms our assumption of a single entrance to the cave when he heaves into place a massive boulder that blocks entrance to and exit from his dwelling (240–44).

Unlike Polyphemos' cave, that of Philoctetes, we are told, has two entrances. Sophocles impresses this fact on his audience by having Odysseus mention it prominently in his description of the cave early on (16–19) and by having Neoptolemus remind the audience when he, in turn, points out to the chorus the rocky "dwelling with double entrance" (159). For the most part, critics have taken this unusual detail as evidence that the play was staged so that only one of the two entrances was visible to the audience, allowing Philoctetes to enter the stage through that entrance, coming out of a cave that had previously been ascertained to be vacant.¹⁴ There are good reasons for doubting that Philoctetes made his entrance through the opening in the stage building, but it does not therefore follow, as David Robinson (1969: 34–41) and J.F. Davidson (1990) contend, that both of the cave's entrances could be seen by the audience in the theater. For we are still left with the question of what purpose was served by having Sophocles construct a cave with two mouths, both of which empty onto the acting area. Robinson (1969: 37) suggests that "it had to be a distinctive cave that could be reidentified, and also one in which Philoctetes can have survived for a long time." This is unsatisfactory in all its points. Polyphemos lived, apparently, his whole life in a cave with only a single entrance; the distinctiveness of Philoctetes' cave is adequately conveyed by Odysseus' description of the fount of fresh flowing water just below and to the left of the entrance (20–21); and, in any event, the distinctive features of the cave do not have to be visible to the audience for them to be identified by the characters on stage (presumably, the audience could not see the fount of flowing water either). If, then, no attractive explanation is available for having both entrances visible, we must assume, with the majority of scholars, that only one entrance could be seen by the audience. But we do not also have to assume that Philoctetes entered through that entrance. The reason for Sophocles' elaborate emphasis on the second entrance

to the cave was precisely to arouse in the audience an uncertainty as to the location at which Odysseus' mortal enemy would first be seen. Robinson (1969: 37) dismisses this as a "dramatic trick," a characterization that is reminiscent of Aristophanes' criticism of prolonged Aeschylean silences as the work of a "con artist and trickster" (*Frogs* 909).

In fact, the misdirection that Sophocles creates here is, like Aeschylus' use of temporarily silent characters, another instance of an experienced dramatist exploiting to the full the potential of the theater to create a sense of anticipation in ways that no other literary genre can attempt. In the case of Aeschylean silences, it is the audience's experience of time that is manipulated, as the audience is waiting expectantly to find out when (or if) the character will break his or her silence. At the start of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, it is the theater's unique spatial dimension that is used to enhance the feeling of expectancy. The Attic theater has three locations at stage level at which actors can enter the acting area, the door leading into the stage building and the two side entrances, or *parodoi*. The *parodos* along which Odysseus and Neoptolemus entered represents the path leading to the shore, where their ship lies moored. Philoctetes cannot be expected to enter from there, since that is the path that Odysseus and his companion have just traversed. Everything leading up to Philoctetes' entrance is designed to augment the sense of danger posed by this man who possess an unerring bow (105) and is characterized by anger expressed by "savage curses" (ἀγρίαις ... δυσφημίαις, 9–10). The reminiscences of Odysseus' Homeric encounter with the savage Polyphemus (ἄγριον, 9.215, 494) encourage this feeling of ominous anticipation.¹⁵ But, while the Homeric Odysseus tells the Phaeacians, on the basis of his subsequent knowledge, that the inhabitant of the empty cave was "far off" (ἀπόπροθεν, 9.188), the Sophoclean character infers from Philoctetes' crippled condition that he must be nearby (οὐχ ἑκάς, 41), an assumption that is repeated by Neoptolemus (πέλας που, 163), not long before the chorus first announce that they can hear the groans of the approaching Philoctetes (201). The audience, however, cannot hear those groans. They know that the appearance of Philoctetes is imminent, but they do not know where they can expect to see him, and the chorus nourish the uncertainty by saying that the sound is coming "from here, apparently, or there" (ἢ που τᾷδ' ἢ τᾷδε τόπων, 204). Because of Sophocles' careful preparation, the audience is at this point in suspense, not knowing whether to look to the *parodos* or to the entrance to the stage building. And, just moments before Philoctetes speaks his first words, we are given one more hint that this entrance will be both like and unlike the appearance of Homer's cave-dwelling herdsman, when the chorus announce that the

approaching man's cries of pain do not resemble the piping of a shepherd (213–14).

This technique is by no means confined to Sophocles, nor is it a new development of the last decade of the fifth century, when *Philoctetes* was first produced. The way in which the dramatist has deployed it, however, by combining it with “literary” reminiscences of a Homeric antecedent, is unusual and may be a Sophoclean innovation, perhaps even occurring for the first time in this play. Earlier in the century, Euripides had availed himself of the opportunity that the theater presents of arousing the audience's expectations regarding the location of a character's entrance. In his *Medea*, produced in 431 BC, Euripides created a spectacular *coup de théâtre* with the final entrance of Medea, who had earlier exited through the door of the stage building to kill her and Jason's children. Jason rushes onto the scene (1293), hoping to save his children and to punish Medea for her earlier murders of the Corinthian princess and her father, the king. Jason is told by the chorus, however, that he is too late and that if he opens the door he will see the murdered bodies of his children (1313). The attention of the spectators in the theater is now fully focused on Jason, at stage level, ordering the door to be opened and, apparently, attempting to force the door himself.¹⁶ Euripides has deliberately and dramatically aroused the audience's expectations, however, in order to frustrate them. For Medea and her dead children appear, not behind the door, which is never opened, but high above, in a magical chariot capable of flight, allowing Medea to frustrate Jason's pursuit. Euripides would later create a similar effect in his *Orestes*, produced in 408 BC, the year after Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. Again, as in *Medea*, it occurs at the end of the play, after Orestes had entered the door of the stage building (1537), sword in hand, having threatened to kill Menelaus' daughter Hermione. Menelaus arrives in haste and orders his attendants to force open the door (1554, 1561–62). But Menelaus and the audience are surprised when Orestes addresses them from the roof of the stage building, holding his sword at Hermione's throat (1567; cf. Halleran 1985: 43).

Surprise and uncertainty regarding an entry into the theatrical space are also exploited by the author of *Prometheus Bound*, the date and authorship of which are subject to a surprising degree of uncertainty. If the play is by Aeschylus, of course, it dates to a time before that author's death in 456 BC. But if, as most scholars now agree, its dramaturgy is strikingly un-Aeschylean and its intellectual outlook more appropriate to the second half of the fifth century, the most we can say is that it certainly predates the production in 414 BC of Aristophanes' *Birds*, which contains unmistakable references to it (Bees 1993: 22–27). Among the many controversies surrounding the

play, one relatively minor one is concerned with the words spoken (or, perhaps, partly spoken and partly sung) by Prometheus, at lines 115–27, immediately before the entrance of the chorus. Prometheus is now alone on stage, having been left by Zeus’ agents, who had earlier been seen fastening him securely, and rather brutally, to the rocky cliff that will be his home for the next 30,000 years. He cries out to the elements, his only companions, to witness the unjust treatment that he, the benefactor of the human race, is suffering. Then, suddenly, he asks what sound and what fragrance have wafted to his desolate crag. He senses that something is approaching, but he cannot see it or them, and so he speculates concerning the nature and possible motivation of this unknown entity, “divinely impelled, or mortal, or of some intermediate character” (116). Since Prometheus is fastened to his rock, he cannot see what is behind him and it is likely that the audience can see what is approaching him well before Prometheus can. Unfortunately, the text does not allow us to determine at what point the unknown entity becomes visible to the audience, so that we are not in a position to know how much of Prometheus’ blind speculation is shared by the viewers in the theater. At any rate, it is clear from the text that Prometheus imagines the newcomer(s) to be animate and to be detectable by both sound and smell. By lines 124–26, he identifies the nearby sound as that of the rustling of the air caused by the rapid movement of birds’ wings. We (and the fifth-century audience) know from Hesiod’s *Theogony* (523–25) that Zeus’ further punishment of Prometheus will include the dispatch of “an eagle with wide-spread wings,” that is to visit Prometheus daily to feast on his continually regenerated liver. For this reason, Stephen Tracy (1971) argued that the playwright constructed Prometheus’ reaction to the advent of the chorus in such a way as to arouse false expectations in his audience. Unfortunately, Tracy did not construct his argument as well as he might have done, leaving himself open to the criticisms of Bruce Donovan (1973) and Oliver Taplin (1977: 250–51). Specifically, according to Tracy, the word Prometheus uses for “scent” (ὄδμα, 115) “connotes a very strong, penetrating odor,” the word “wafted” (προσέπτα, 115) “clearly indicates a bird,” and “divinely impelled” (θεόσυντος, 116) “specifically points to the eagle sent by Zeus.” In fact, ὄδμα is a perfectly neutral word that connotes nothing more than that which can be perceived by the olfactory sense, προσέπτα does not necessarily imply flight, and θεόσυντος, particularly in this context, need only be a fancy synonym for a word meaning “divine.” But none of this terminology is incompatible with the suggestion that the author is encouraging the audience to think of the possibility that what is approaching – or, at least, what Prometheus thinks is approaching – is the eagle that represents the next round of

the protagonist's torment. Everything that is connected with the gods shares in the widely attested divine fragrance (Lohmeyer 1919: 6), so that it is not surprising that Zeus' eagle should be imagined to give off a distinctive aroma; while *προσπέτομαι* is often used figuratively, it does, after all, literally refer to flight; and the eagle sent by Zeus, as Hermes will explain later in the play (1021–25), will indeed be “divinely impelled.”

In his criticism of Tracy's suggestion, Donovan concludes by saying that there is “nothing about the diction of lines 115–117 which would *require* the audience to shift its thoughts to the advent of an eagle” (1973: 127, with original emphasis). But there is no question of “shifting” the audience's thoughts, nor is there anything about the diction of the lines that would *require* the audience to think of a chorus of Oceanids, which is what the sounds and smells turn out to presage. In fact, the chorus' reference to their wings (129) and their winged vehicle (135) indicates that, incongruously given their aqueous nature, the daughters of Ocean are represented as having made their entry flying through the air. How exactly this was staged has been a matter of considerable controversy, and it is uncertain whether the members of the chorus arrived in individual flying carts or in a single winged transport, whether they entered literally through the air by means of the “machine” or in more pedestrian fashion along the *parodoi* (see, e.g., J.F. Davidson 1994). Regardless of how the entry of the chorus was actually staged, the details of that staging came as a surprise to the audience, a surprise that was magnified by the anxious uncertainty of Prometheus that led up to it. At this point in the play, the audience would ordinarily expect the next entrance to be that of the chorus. But the words that Prometheus uses are inconclusive as to whether one character or several are about to arrive at Prometheus' lonely outpost through the air.¹⁷ The audience's sense of the unlikelihood that a tragic chorus might enter by means of the “machine” will have encouraged some members of the audience to speculate that perhaps it was not the chorus whose arrival Prometheus was sensing. Whether some thought that Zeus' eagle was about to be brought onto the scene or not, all will have been uncertain as to whether the next character to enter would arrive on the “machine” or at ground level, and all will have looked expectantly, now at the *parodos*, now at the roof of the stage building, wondering not only what was going to happen next but also where it was going to happen.

This exploitation of space and of the audience's spatial expectations is a totally new possibility that the drama brings to literary expression, and we have seen its potential explored by every fifth-century tragedian whose works survive. In the instances in which this exploitation is used to frustrate the audience's expectations or to

create an ominous ambience, modern critics may regard it as a species of “cheap trick,” if not, in Richard Wagner’s expression, “effect without cause.”¹⁸ This is presumably because modern critics associate this device with suspense or horror movies and with comedy, both filmed and staged, where the very cause of the effect is the mere desire to manipulate the audience’s expectations. The device was, naturally, used by fifth-century comic poets as well, to humorous effect, like the surprising entrance of Socrates in a suspended basket in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. But we should not dismiss occurrences in tragedy as inconsequential. They are part and parcel of the dramatist’s technical toolkit, and we should not be embarrassed by them, as scholars who think of Greek tragedies as blocks of text on a page seem to be. The creation of suspense on the stage produces a profound effect on the spectator in the theater that cannot be created in any other medium before the invention of the cinema. It serves to enhance the spectator’s identification with the character on stage, since the two of them, spectator and dramatic character alike, exist in the same space. Prometheus knows that something is about to arrive, but he does not know what it is; neither does the audience. Neoptolemus does not know from what direction Philoctetes will arrive; neither does the audience. Jason does not know that Medea will appear on the roof in a magic winged chariot; neither does the audience.

All this is in stark contrast to the narrator, who knows – indeed, whose job it is to know – what the audience does not know. Odysseus tells the Phaeacians his story on the basis of direct personal knowledge. He has, in fact, lived the experiences that he narrates. He holds his audience in his thrall precisely because the members of his audience recognize and implicitly accept the disparity between their ignorance of the story and his mastery of it. That does not, of course, mean that his telling of the story is true, authoritative, or lacking in tendentiousness. (The same is naturally the case with every narrator in every circumstance.) But it does mean that he is in control of where the story is going. We, the audience, surrender control and are subjected, willingly, to the likelihood that our expectations will be frustrated, that we will be at times mystified and at times surprised, just as we willingly surrender ourselves, for exactly the same reasons, to the virtuosity of a pianist who is prepared to delight us with a performance of a Haydn sonata. But once we willingly adopt the suspension of disbelief that allows us to say to ourselves, “This man is Odysseus and that man is Neoptolemus,” we have implicitly acknowledged that this man and that man are, like us, subject to the likelihood that their expectations will be frustrated and that they will be at times mystified and at times surprised. What is more, we witness this man and that man undergoing these experiences at the same time

and in the same space as we are. The relationship, that is, between us and the characters of the story is significantly and fundamentally different in the drama from what it is in the case of a story that is narrated to us. We will explore further the implications of this difference in Chapter 5.

¹ Despite his statement, “Only a feature not directly connected with meter or delivery, the *mask*, revolutionized all: the performer now shed all vestiges of his rhapsode personality and merged visually as well as verbally into his speaking part” (118–19, with original emphasis), this is the only place, apart from a passing reference at 127, where, according to the Index, the revolutionary feature of the mask is even mentioned.

² Burian (1997: 199: “apart from prologue speeches that are in effect addressed to the audience to set the scene, there is practically no soliloquy in Greek tragedy, for at least the chorus is there to listen”). For the function of monologue in tragedy, see Leo (1908) and Schadewaldt (1926).

³ Montiglio (2000) and J. Heath (2005: 171–212) explore the place of silence in Greek culture. For silence as a dramatic effect on the Greek tragic stage, see Taplin (1972), Mastronarde (1979: 74–84, 114–17), and Seale (1982: 135).

⁴ Πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί. See Solon frag. 29 West, with the passages cited by West (1989–1992, vol. 2: 157); cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 27; Pindar, *Olympian* 1.28–29, and *Nemean* 7.20–23. See, in general, Pratt (1993). The proverbial deceptiveness of poets contributes to the irony in Heraclitus frag. 21 Marcovich, where Homer, “the wisest of all the Greeks,” is said to have been deceived (ἐξηπάτησαν) by riddling boys.

⁵ The chatterboxes (οἱ λαλοῦντες, 917), of course, include those dramatists who have been influenced by Euripides (Radermacher 1921: 276), who will soon boast that he is himself the one who taught the Athenians to be chatterboxes (τουτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα, 954; cf. Lada-Richards 1999: 238).

⁶ τί δὲ ταῦτ’ ἔδρασ’ ὁ δεῖνα; 918. I am inclined to agree with Tucker (1906: 199–200) that ὁδεῖνα is more likely to refer to the silent character (i.e., “Niobe or Achilles or whoever”) than to Aeschylus.

⁷ ὑπ' ἀλαζονείας, ἵν' ὁ θεατῆς προσδοκῶν κάθοιτο, / ὀπόθ' ἡ Νιόβη τι φθέγγεται, 919–20.

⁸ Thus, while I agree with J.R. Green (1994: 20) that this technique served the purpose of enhancing the effect of characters' breaking their silence, I cannot approve of his proposal that it “evolved in reaction against the increase in the number of actors and so was an overt and deliberately attention-getting rejection of what was seen as a recent advance.”

⁹ For this reason, what I refer to as “counterpoint” is entirely different from the “polyphony of theatrical dialogue” referred to by Nick Lowe (2000: 176 n. 36) or the “polyphony” described by Edith Hall (1997: 118; similarly Mastronarde 2010: 19), that is, the “multivocal form of tragedy, which allows diverse characters to speak” and which “reflects the contemporary development of rhetoric in democratic Athens.” True polyphony entails the *simultaneous* sounding of different voices and, as will be argued, rhetoric reflects the development of the drama, not vice versa.

¹⁰ Or “analepsis” and “interlace technique,” to use the terminology developed by the practitioners of narratological theory: de Jong, Nünlist, and Bowie (2004: xv–xvi).

¹¹ He may have been immediately recognizable to some if he entered wearing the *pilos*, his invariable headgear in fifth-century depictions of Odysseus in the visual arts (Pipili 2000: 174).

¹² For a full narratological account of this passage, see de Jong (2001: 235–39).

¹³ Indoor scenes are occasionally represented in the Attic theater (Rehm 2002: 89–91), but the interior of a cave would be an unprecedented and awkward setting for a tragedy.

¹⁴ See J.F. Davidson (1990: 307, with bibliography in n. 2).

¹⁵ In addition to the similarities noted above by Bowie and others, both Polyphemus and Philoctetes are loners (οἶον ἄπ' ἄλλων, *Od.* 9.192; cf. μοῦνος ἄπ' ἄλλων, *Phil.* 183); like Odysseus' companions (9.224–27), Neoptolemus expresses a preference for a different approach to the situation, but must obey his commanding officer (86–94); and, like Homer's Odysseus, who

had deceived the Cyclops by lying about his name (9.364–67), Sophocles' Odysseus encourages Neoptolemus to say anything he likes about him to Philoctetes (64–66).

¹⁶ For details of the staging, see Collinge (1962), Halleran (1985: 42–43), Rehm (2002: 253–54), and Mastronarde (2002: 372–74, 376–78). For the spectacular nature of Medea's eventual entrance, its iconography, and its implications, see Taplin (2007: 117–23) and Cunningham (1954).

¹⁷ As Griffith (1983: 106, on lines 115–19) notes, the uncertainty, on the part of both Prometheus and the audience, regarding the number of new arrivals is conveyed by the inconsistency in number, which shifts from singular (118) to plural (119).

¹⁸ “Wirkung ohne Ursache,” Wagner (1869: 87).

Illusion and Collusion

In Chapter 4, we saw how the drama differs fundamentally from narrative modes of expression, the difference consisting in the introduction of what we have called “counterpoint,” which complicates the relationship, and potentially creates a tension, between what the audience hears and what it sees. The visual aspect of the drama is not a mere enhancement of the poet’s words, like the gestures and facial expressions that the bard might employ to give color and immediacy to his narrative. It may, on the contrary, suggest an alternative to the narrative implicit in the words of the characters on stage. We will explore the implications of this in subsequent chapters, specifically, the way in which the creation of this counterpoint led to the development of a formal rhetoric in fifth-century Greece. But for now we need to consider how it came about that this fundamental distinction has been so widely ignored. We suggested in Chapter 1 that widespread literacy, which reduces plays and political tracts to equal status as “texts,” contributed to this homogenization, which had begun to take place already by the time of Aristotle, for whom *opsis* was little more than window dressing. This process of homogenization was remarkably quick. We may speculate that the very rapid spread of Attic tragedy throughout the Greek world in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, in the form of both written texts and performances on stage, led to its being taken more or less for granted as yet another literary genre, on the level of epic verse or choral lyric. In our own time we have witnessed a similar acceptance, in a similarly compressed span of time, of the cinema, which has very quickly taken its place next to the novel as the prime form of narrative expression in our cultural life.¹ At any rate, the matter deserves further investigation, which we do not have time for now.

We do, however, have time to consider the question of what has happened since the age of Aristotle – and, specifically, in the last half-century or so – that has caused us to lose sight of the counterpoint that is fundamental to the dramatic experience. The field of Classics has seen two developments that began in the late twentieth century

that, in their very different ways, seem to have steered classicists even further away from an appreciation of the uniqueness of the drama. One, to which we will return shortly, is, rather surprisingly, the rise of the study of narratology, which in fact makes a point of distinguishing between the narrative and dramatic modes. The other is the fascination, among some classicists, with the notion of what has come to be called “performance.” One of the great benefits to come from the work of Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and other students of oral-compositional technique is a full appreciation of the status of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as poems that belong to a tradition of songs that were created in and for public performance (e.g., Lord 2000; Parry 1971). At the same time, we have arrived at a greater understanding of the performance context in ancient Greece of other narrative forms.² In recent years, however, the word “performance” has come to be denuded of any meaning that it might once have had. In 1989 Richard Martin published a study entitled *The Language of Heroes*, which has since become influential among classicists, despite some detailed reviews that found serious flaws in its argumentation.³ Basing his work on comparative anthropological material and on speech-act theory, Martin alleges that whenever the heroes depicted in the *Iliad* speak they are “performing,” using their words as a means of establishing and maintaining their own, while at the same time diminishing others’, status. “Every hero,” according to Martin, “is a performer” (146). At the same time, Homer himself is using his own words (and style and performing skills) in a competitive effort to stake out his superiority as a poet to his rivals. Therefore, as Martin sees it, Homer is himself a hero, since he too, no less than Achilles, is a performer (231–39).

Others have gone even farther. Simon Goldhill, introducing his contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* on the audience of Athenian tragedy, says, “The culture of classical Greece was a performance culture” (1997: 54). According to Goldhill, not only were the actors in the Theater of Dionysus performing but so was every citizen in the audience. And what was each member of the audience performing? By virtue of his membership in the tragic audience, each citizen could be expected “to play the role of democratic citizen” (54, with original emphasis). It seems that everyone in ancient Greece was performing, and they were doing it all the time. Some were “performing masculinity” (Williamson 1998), while others found themselves typecast in other roles. On a daily basis, “the performance of self” (Scodel 1999–2000: 132) and the “performance of selfhood” (Herzfeld 1985: 10) could be witnessed as individuals were seen “performing selfhood and citizenship” (Farenga 2006: 448) openly in the streets. And, when the Greeks were not busy performing the self

they could divert themselves by “playing the other” (Zeitlin 1990). “Justice and the law” were regularly performed (Farenga 2006) and, on at least one occasion, “the performance of truth” is attested as having taken place on, of all places, the tragic stage (Gunderson 2000: 141). All of Athens – or, as the Alexandrian poet Palladas puts it (*Anthologia Graeca* 10.72), all of life – is a stage. Speakers in the Athenian Assembly “were as much actors as actors in a play” (Worthington 2004: 143), and trials in Athenian courtrooms were “lawcourt dramas” (Hall 1995). Understanding Athenian political life today entails an understanding of the drama and vice versa (Ober and Strauss 1990). But if we regard everything as a performance, if everyone is a spectator and everyone is a performer (even by virtue of being a spectator), what has been gained? In fact, we saw in Chapter 4 that a great deal is lost if we follow John Herington, who argues that the tragic contests “involve the same variety of performance” as the various types of choral and narrative poetry that existed before the invention of the drama.⁴ Surely even more is lost if we not only consider the rhapsode Ion and the tragic actor to be engaged in essentially the same activity but also expand our understanding of that activity to include serving on a jury and buying a fish in the agora.

Unlike those who are determined to see “performance” everywhere, students of narratology are, for the most part, careful to distinguish between narrative and drama and to keep separate the methods of analysis appropriate to the two modes. I say “for the most part” because there are some who wish to see the drama as itself a species of narrative.⁵ In particular, John Gould, in a lecture delivered in 1991 and published in 2001, seeks to show that “tragic drama aspires to the condition of narrative.”⁶ That is, it is repeatedly the case that characters on the tragic stage “are presented to us as engaged in a struggle to convert experience into narrative.” As is often the case with this thoughtful scholar, the arguments are subtle and deserve to be taken seriously. Gould’s focus is on the absence, in the drama, of a controlling narrator (although he does, at the same time, ascribe to the playwright the power of controlling the flow of the dramatic narrative). That being the case, each of the characters in the play is concerned to represent the situation from his or her own perspective, creating a “narrative” that, in many instances, conflicts with that created by other characters in the play. (Unfortunately for Gould’s argument, the examples he gives are entirely in the form of the *words* spoken by the characters, that is, “narratives” in the literal sense.) This provides what might be termed a “counterpoint,” although Gould does not so term it. In this respect, the drama is indeed not necessarily different from any other narrative form, for even a controlling narrator can be represented by the author as having

to contend with the (other) characters for control over the narrative, as can be seen, for example, in the *Odyssey*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or Richardson's *Clarissa*. Likewise, we should remember that even Kurosawa's film *Rashomon* is a dramatization of a short story, which, although it lacks a narrator, is purely narrative in form.⁷

Gould provides some examples from fifth-century tragedy of dramatic characters presenting their own narratives that are slightly, or radically, at odds with other versions available to the audience (2001: 327–28): Tecmessa's account in Sophocles' *Ajax* of the disturbing events of the previous night, the messenger's contradiction of Lichas' version of Heracles' motivation in *Trachiniae*, and the narratives of the chorus and the Old Man in Euripides' *Ion*. Indeed, all of these could just as well have been represented in the narrative mode as instances of characters who construct versions of events that conflict with the version presented by the omniscient narrator. The messenger in *Trachiniae* does in fact perform a role very much comparable to that of a third-person narrator when he informs us, in the process of informing Deianeira, that Lichas' present account is at variance with what he had earlier said in the presence of many witnesses (351–74). But this instance is very different from the other two examples, from *Ajax* and *Ion*, that Gould cites, and the difference is indicative of the fundamental distinction between narrative and drama. In *Trachiniae*, the messenger reports that Lichas has contradicted himself and that one or the other of his two statements must therefore be incorrect (346–48), even suggesting to Deianeira that she apply the test of likelihood (εἰκός, 368) to judge which of the two is false.⁸ The audience is thereby offered the same basis for judgment. What we are dealing with here is a situation in which there are two discrepant accounts, neither of which is authoritative, although we are given good reason to believe that Lichas is deliberately concealing from Deianeira Heracles' passion for Iole. This is a situation that can equally well be presented in narrative or dramatic mode.⁹ The two other examples that Gould provides, however, are of an entirely different nature and can only be presented in dramatic form, as Gould himself seems at some level to be aware. He refers to Tecmessa's version of "events that we have ourselves just witnessed in the play's opening movement" and to the falsification of the narratives of the chorus and the Old Man "by our prior witnessing of the exchanges between Ion and Xouthos." One cannot speak – because it would be false to do so – of "witnessing" an occurrence in a novel or an epic narrative. No matter how vivid Homer's account of the meeting between Achilles and Priam, or how memorable Thomas Pynchon's description of Esther's nose job, we cannot say that we have "witnessed" either event. It is the mark of a skillful narrator to make

the audience feel “as if” they had witnessed the event. It is only the dramatist who can actually turn the audience into an eyewitness to the binding of Prometheus or the blinding of Gloucester.

Indeed, one of the techniques that narratology examines is the way in which narrative creates in the audience the feeling “as if” they were witnesses to the events narrated – how, in effect, narrative aspires to the condition of drama. There is an irony here that seems to have escaped the notice of those who have written recently on the narratives that are contained in the drama.¹⁰ Characters in drama are often engaged in narration, not only in the many “messenger speeches” but also in Euripidean prologues, in choral lyrics, and elsewhere, and these have been productively studied in narratological terms. So, for example, in her analysis of messenger speeches in Euripides, Irene de Jong points out – in a section entitled “The Messenger-Speech as Drama” – that messengers frequently enliven their reports with direct quotation. This is done “to increase the vividness and drama of the messenger-speech. The characters quoted actually seem to be speaking” (de Jong 1991: 131). Further, direct quotation “is used by the Euripidean messenger in an effective way, in order to make his narrative a dramatic one; the characters in his story come alive and speak for themselves, sometimes even in dialogue” (138). But for the most part we have already seen the characters in his story ourselves, speaking for themselves, sometimes even in dialogue. When the messenger in the *Bacchae* quotes Pentheus’ last words, entreating his mother to pity him, it is a vivid touch that enhances the pathos of the scene. But the pathos is all the greater for the fact that we have ourselves seen and heard Pentheus himself, only 15 minutes before, speaking in dialogue with the pitiless Dionysus, who leads him off to his hideous death. Elsewhere, de Jong contrasts Euripides’ technique with that of Aeschylus and Sophocles: Unlike them, Euripides often does not have his messenger reveal the outcome of the message at the start, so that the messenger’s addressees (and the audience) are allowed to experience the reported events, as it were, as they unfold. Again, this is exactly what the drama does by its very nature. The technique of the Euripidean messenger speech is being commended for doing in narrative form what the dramatic form itself does even better.

In fact, the irony involved is even greater than it at first sight appears. Not only do we see in Irene de Jong an experienced and knowledgeable student of the age-old art of narrative analyzing narrative accounts in terms of the relatively recently invented dramatic art form in which these particular narratives are embedded; even more striking is the fact that the vocabulary employed by de Jong to make her point is no more appropriate to the drama than it is

to the reality that dramatic works (and purely narrative forms as well) purport to represent. That is, for de Jong and, I suspect, for many others, the boundary between drama and reality has become so porous that one is scarcely conscious of having penetrated it. And so, when de Jong speaks of the characters whose words are quoted in messenger speeches as coming “alive” and as “actually” seeming to speak, she presents these features of “reality” in terms of their contribution to the “drama” of the situation.¹¹ But, of course, the messenger who is quoting those words is every bit as “alive” as the character whose vitality is supposedly being enhanced by being quoted directly. The reason for this oversight would seem to be, again, that we are now so accustomed to the representation of “reality” in the drama that we are perfectly comfortable speaking of the one in terms of the other. Just as we speak of “witnessing” the confrontation between Jason and Medea when in fact what we have witnessed is two actors impersonating those mythical characters, so we speak of “playing a role” in the community in which we conduct our daily life. We saw earlier that a number of scholars speak as though every aspect of life in ancient Greece is a form of “performance.” Here, similarly, we see that the more convincingly realistic a narrative is, the more it seems to approximate ... the drama. What is particularly interesting about this latter instance is the curious absence of historical awareness that it evinces. For narrative has, presumably, always aspired to be vivid and realistic, even in the murky past, at a time before the invention of the drama. It cannot, therefore, be to the condition of drama that narrative aspires, but to that of reality. It is equally perverse, as we saw above, to claim with John Gould that “tragic drama aspires to the condition of narrative.” Rather, the two forms have in common that they purport to represent something other than themselves – something that I have despairingly referred to as “reality” for lack of a less unsatisfactory term – but their methods of representation differ radically.

Narrative necessarily relates events that take place at a remove from the locus of narration, either temporally, because the events took place in the past, or spatially, in those cases where events are reported, as they happen, to a narratee who cannot personally witness them. Those of the latter type are of only rare occurrence in Attic drama. Perhaps the most striking instance is the scene in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* (565–600), when the horrified Phaedra recounts to the chorus what she is overhearing of the offstage conversation between the nurse and Hippolytus. Earlier, in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants*, Danaus had described in some detail to his daughters, who make up the chorus, what he can see from the eminence on which he is standing: the approaching army of the Argive king (180–83) and the arrival of the

Egyptian ship (713–23). On the modern stage, likewise, such scenes are uncommon. Examples include Act IV, scene i of Ben Jonson's *Eastward Ho*, in which Slitgut describes to the audience what he sees happening on the Thames below him; and Act III, scene v of Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, where Golaud lifts up the reluctant Yniold so he can see into Mélisande's bedroom. A more extended instance is Scene Three of Kleist's *Penthesilea*, which presents the dramatic pursuit of Achilles by the Amazon queen in the form of a series of excited descriptions of the offstage events given to each other by a number of Greek warriors. It is worth noting, and registering some surprise at, the infrequency of this device. One would think that it could afford the playwright a useful means of broadening the scope of the theatrical space. And the cases of Phaedra and Golaud show how well this device can serve to isolate a character, who is dramatically shown by these means to be the victim of forces beyond his or her control.

The effect produced by this device is unique to the drama, as is that produced by a situation that is, as it were, the converse of the situation that we have been discussing, namely, when an onstage character describes what he or she claims to be seeing, whereas we in the audience know that the character is having hallucinatory visions. We can gauge the potency of the effect directly, because we are fortunate to be able to compare the same occurrence presented once in the narrative mode and once in the dramatic. In discussing the “mediating” character of the narrator, Irene de Jong (1991: 164–65) compares Euripides' two representations of Orestes' delusions, once as narrated in a messenger speech (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 281–314) and once dramatized on stage (*Orestes* 253–76). According to de Jong, what the onstage narrator can supply, and what are missing from the dramatized mode of presentation, “are the exegetical explanations of the ‘he did x, thinking he was doing y’ type.” Thus the herdsman, in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, explains that the mad Orestes imagined that the Furies were attacking him *because* he mistook the lowing of cattle and the barking of dogs for the voices of the Furies (lines 291–94). But how does the herdsman know this? He has, presumably, simply inferred it on the basis of what he has witnessed: the sounds of the animals, Orestes' shouts to Pylades alerting him to the supposed onslaught of the Furies, and, finally, Orestes' attack upon the cattle. The herdsman is merely an anonymous messenger; he does not, like the narrator of the Homeric poems, have access to inspiration from the Muse.¹² He does not, therefore, have any privileged insight; if we had been present on the seashore to witness the events that he describes, we would have drawn exactly the same inference. And that is precisely what we are invited to do for ourselves, without

mediation, when Euripides presents the mad Orestes on stage in the play entitled *Orestes*. In the first episode we see the sane Orestes in conversation with his sister Electra, when suddenly, at line 253, Electra notices that his mental state has deteriorated and immediately Orestes claims to see the Furies attacking him. When Electra tries to reassure him with her words and her embrace, Orestes addresses her (264–65) as though she is one of the Furies. We do not need a nameless bystander to explain that Orestes has mistaken his sister for a Fury, nor do we need to have it spelled out for us that it was Electra's mention of Clytaemestra, immediately before line 253, that occasioned the onset of Orestes' hallucinations. We do, however, need Electra to tell Orestes (259) that what he thinks he is seeing is a delusion, otherwise we in the audience might expect to see the Furies appear on stage, as they did in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. But the same was true of the narrative account in *Iphigenia in Tauris*: The herdsman tells his onstage auditors, and thereby the theater audience, that despite Orestes' claims, the Furies were nowhere to be seen (291–92).

The effect, then, of the dramatized enactment is an even more immediate sense of the isolation of Orestes. Rather than being told that an offstage Orestes claimed to see the Furies and being told that no one else could see them, we ourselves see and hear Orestes reacting to the Furies, to whose absence we can ourselves attest. This striking – and strikingly dramatic – effect was not invented by Euripides, although he exploited its potential for generating pathos to a greater degree than his predecessors. As with so many of the novel features unique to the drama, this effect is already attested in the work of the earliest dramatist, Aeschylus. At the very end of *The Libation Bearers*, as the chorus are congratulating Orestes for having liberated Argos by killing Aegisthus and Clytaemestra, Orestes cries out, claiming that he sees horrible, snake-entwined women pursuing him (1048–50). The chorus' assurance that this is merely an unsubstantial vision is designed for the instruction of the audience (and serves to magnify the impact of the actual appearance of the Furies on stage in the following play of the trilogy; Brown 1983: 23). When Orestes protests that these are not merely private visions, the chorus even offer to explain Orestes' altered mental state as arising from the newly shed blood on his hands (1055–56). After acknowledging the chorus' inability to see what he is sure he can see plainly, Orestes departs for Delphi, alone. Thus we have, already in 458 BC, the full potential of the newly created dramatic genre employed to maximize the engagement of the audience and to convey the isolation of one of the characters in a way that cannot quite be conveyed in the narrative mode.¹³ Paradoxically, what the dramatic mode can present to an audience with unprecedented immediacy is ... an absence. The audience is enlisted

to use its sense of sight to put to the test the words and gestures of the character on stage, who describes and points to something that the audience can see is not there. This tension between the visual and the auditory lies at the heart of the “counterpoint” that we identified earlier as being specific to the drama. We saw it at work in Chapter 4 in connection with a different sort of absence, namely, in the uniquely dramatic way in which the silence of a character can be deployed to engage the audience, another device fully explored and exploited in the Aeschylean theater (see pp. 60–65).

In contrast to the drama, narrative has to resort to various expedients to reduce the temporal, or more rarely spatial, barrier between events and audience. Its goal is vividness, in the sense that it seeks to give the impression that the narrated events are taking place simultaneously with the narrative, before the very eyes of the narratee. One of the techniques that narrative uses to this end, as we have seen, is the introduction of direct quotation. Victor Bers, in *Speech in Speech* (1997), has examined the use of direct quotation in Attic drama and oratory. He puts to the test the standard assumption (2–3) that direct quotation contributes a degree of liveliness and vividness that is not conveyed by the report of someone’s words or thoughts in the form of indirect discourse. Among Bers’ conclusions (223–24), after an exhaustive study of the available evidence, is the following:

Indeed, the very notion of OR [*oratio recta*, that is, direct quotation] as more lively or vivid than the surrounding text needs some refining. True, when a speaker steps away from words that are his own to those that are presented as issuing from another source, the shift might create a character and a situation apprehended by the imagination with some detail, say of how the man to whom the OR is attributed stood or sounded. If the imagination is so prompted, the impression created by the OR can be deemed “lively” or “vivid” in the sense that another person seems to be, in a sense, present. But it is not inevitable that OR engages the imagination in that way. To read a transcript of even an exciting courtroom exchange in a flat voice is to set the audience yawning: there is no magic in OR. If OR is vivid, that is because of some combination of the quality of the words and a mimetic delivery.

But there is magic of sorts in direct quotation, which, of course, can be dispelled by incompetent delivery, just as the magic of Shakespeare’s Queen Mab can be debased by a leaden Mercutio. By its very nature, direct quotation creates a dynamic that is not present in indirect discourse. This can be illustrated with an example chosen at

random from one of the passages examined by Bers, from the first speech of Lysias (1.25–26), which Bers quotes (146) in W.R.M. Lamb's Loeb translation:

He [Eratosthenes] admitted his guilt: then he besought and implored me not to kill him, but to exact a sum of money. To this I [Euphiletus] replied, – “It is not I who am going to kill you, but our city's laws, which you have transgressed and regarded as of less account than your pleasures, choosing rather to commit this foul offence against my wife and my children than to obey the laws like a decent person.”

The effect of the direct quotation becomes clear when we adopt the technique of Plato's Socrates (*Republic* 3.393e–94b; see Chapter 3, p. 46) and convert this passage into one in which there is no direct quotation:

He admitted his guilt: then he besought and implored me not to kill him, but to exact a sum of money. To this I replied that it was not I who was going to kill him, but our city's laws, which he had transgressed and regarded as of less account than his pleasures, choosing rather to commit that foul offence against my wife and my children than to obey the laws like a decent person.

What is missing from this second (and vastly inferior) version is the person of Euphiletus' interlocutor, who in the first version was a living, quivering “you.” Now he has become an inert “him,” dead and gone even before the fatal blow has been struck. Even though, as Bers well points out (146–47), Euphiletus' words are implausibly stiff and cliché ridden, they conjure an absent addressee by the mere use of the second person. Direct address is ordinarily expected to elicit a response, and the absence of a quoted response to Euphiletus' dramatic speech – Euphiletus' next words are “Thus it was, sirs, that this man incurred the fate that the laws ordain” – conveys the more impressively the conviction, which Euphiletus very much wishes to convey, that his words allow of no rejoinder. The use of direct quotation in narrative, then, goes some way toward producing the effect of the “counterpoint” that is characteristic of the drama. But it is not an effect that is inherent in the narrative mode, and the narrator has to employ what we might term “rhetorical” strategies to bring it about. As we can see from this brief Lysianic example, it is not unusual for the narrator to switch between direct and indirect discourse *ad libitum*, reserving the former for the creation of a particular effect, an effect that is generally aimed at breaking down the temporal divide between the audience and the narrated events. Such a divide is erected by the very act of narration and by the use of indirect discourse, which Lysias uses in the case of Eratosthenes (“he

admitted his guilt: then he besought and implored me ...”), muting his voice and forestalling the possibility of his appeal arousing the sympathy of the jurors. This divide does not exist for the audience of a dramatic presentation, except on those occasions when a character in the drama becomes a narrator.

The messenger speech is one of the features – the choral ode is another – that highlight the difference between ancient and modern drama. These two conventions, both of which serve to transport the audience in the theater to a different time and to a place other than the one represented on stage, have sometimes been seen as arising from the constraints of Greek tragedy, which tends to confine its action to a fairly limited time and place. This is only a tendency and not a rule, as Renaissance critics sought to make it, attributing its formulation to Aristotle.¹⁴ Still, it is a fairly strong tendency, and there was nothing in fifth-century tragedy that remotely resembled the freedom with which dramatists from Shakespeare to this day allowed themselves to shift, sometimes repeatedly, from one time or place to another. So, for example, Act II of *Henry V* takes place partly in London, partly in Southampton, and partly at the palace of the French king. And Leos Janáček’s opera *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* is set partly in the twentieth century and partly in the fifteenth, partly in Prague and partly on the moon. One of the reasons for the relative fixity of Attic tragedy was the conventional presence of the chorus and, while few critics today would share Philip Harsh’s severe characterization of the continuous presence of the chorus as “embarrassing” (1944: 26), it was awkward, and hence uncommon (Bremer 1976: 30–34; Taplin 1977: 375–76), for a dramatist to remove the chorus and have it reappear in what is imagined to be a new location. Even in Aristophanic comedy, which “seems free to shift around in time and place” (Taplin 1986: 165), the presence of the chorus has the effect of limiting the temporal and spatial flexibility of the playwright.

Mention of comedy, however, raises an interesting point of distinction between the two dramatic genres. For it is only *after* the entrance of the chorus that comedy feels the need to settle down; before that point there is literally no limit to the extent to which the location can change (Bremer 1976: 31–32). *Frogs* opens in front of the house of Heracles, before the scene is shifted to the underworld, where the chorus (or choruses, if the chorus of frogs is seen on stage) makes its appearance. Similarly, *Birds* starts out firmly grounded on Earth, but the avian chorus is encountered in the location later to be named Cloudcuckooland, situated somewhere between Earth and Heaven. There is, then, in principle no reason why an Attic tragedy could not have begun with a prologue set in, say, Sparta, with the

scene changing to Troy with the entrance of a chorus of Priam's sons. Likewise, comedy is willing to admit to the passage of extended periods of time within the time frame of the play. Thus, the success of the women's sex strike that begins early in *Lysistrata* is threatened by the women's irresolution in the face of prolonged abstinence, to which the characters frequently draw attention (Henderson 1987: 163). In contrast, the impatience of Oedipus in Sophocles' tragedy is conveyed early in the play, when Oedipus notes that Creon ought already to have returned from the mission to Delphi on which Oedipus had sent him before the time at which the play opens (*Oedipus the King* 69–75). And in his *Persians*, Aeschylus underlines the contrast between the optimism with which the Persian army set out on its expedition against Greece and the devastation of defeat, not by staging a glorious sendoff for Xerxes as leader of his troops and then staging Xerxes' solitary return some months later; instead, he has the chorus open the play with an impressive catalogue of the troops and their leaders, stressing their vast numbers and irresistible might, but also expressing concern that no report of the army's triumph has yet arrived (14–15).

What, then, accounts for the difference in the conventions of fifth-century tragedy and comedy, the one tending to confine itself to a limited locale and avoiding the appearance of occupying a noticeably extended period of time, the other feeling much less constrained by temporal and spatial limits? It is not simply the presence of the chorus that imposes these restrictions, since the chorus is equally an indispensable feature of Attic comedy. Indeed, the comic chorus is likely to have inhibited changes of scene to an even greater extent than the tragic, consisting as it did of 24 members in contrast to the tragic chorus' 12 or 15 (Csapo and Slater 1995: 353). And so, while there are no changes of scene in surviving comedy once the chorus is in place, there are occasional instances in tragedy when the chorus departs and reappears, on two of those occasions reappearing in a new location.¹⁵ Oliver Taplin's article "Fifth-Century Tragedy and Comedy: A *Synkrisis*" has demonstrated the fundamental difference between the two genres in terms of theatrical self-reference, "the ways in which plays may, or may not, draw attention to their own 'playness,' to the fact that they are artifices being performed under special controlled circumstances" (1986: 164). Although Taplin does refer to the difference between the two genres in terms of the freedom with which they admit of shifts in time and location (165), he does not make clear how that difference relates to the question of theatrical self-reference. I should like to suggest that tragedy's tendency to confine itself to a limited time and place, the tendency that gave rise to the rigid "unities of time and place" among Renaissance critics, has to do with tragedy's reluctance to call attention to its own "playness."

Again, we in the twenty-first century have been habituated by generations of playgoing and playwriting. We have been inured to the conventions of the theater, and we are happy to accept the premise that the space we see before us is a tavern in London merely because a character on the stage says that it is (and none of the other characters on the stage disputes the claim). And, having been inured, we are equally happy, 10 minutes later, to accept the premise that the space we see before us is now the palace of the French king.¹⁶ For Aeschylus' audience the conventions of the theater were new, indeed were in the process of being invented as the audience sat and watched. The willingness of the early Athenian audience to accept the premise that what they saw before them was the palace of Agamemnon had only recently been secured. That willing acceptance was still too new, too fragile to be jeopardized by repeated demands on the audience to change its frame of reference, whether in spatial or temporal terms. The "unities of time and place," so far from being unnatural, artificial constraints, served in fact to *enhance* the dramatic illusion for the earliest audiences in the theater. Frequent changes of time and place would have had the effect of *endangering* the illusion that the audience was actually witnessing the events unfolding as they watched, in part because frequent changes of time and place are familiar precisely as characteristics of the narrative mode. In Book Seven of the *Odyssey*, for example, within the space of a dozen lines (250–61) the narrator, in this case Odysseus himself, relates that he was shipwrecked and drifted for nine days before washing up on the island of Ogygia, where he spent seven years with Calypso, after which time she sent him on his way. The same freedom to change rapidly the temporal and spatial focus exists as well, of course, for the narratives *within* the drama, such as the messenger speeches and choral odes. But those narratives are related by the characters of the drama, generally addressing themselves to other characters of the drama, whom we see as they, like us, hear and react to the narrative as it is unfolding. The audience to whom Homer's Odysseus narrates his adventures is invisible, except when the poet deliberately calls attention to it and to its reaction, which he does for specific narrative effect (Doherty 1991).

In order for the drama to be taken seriously by its audience, it had first to distance itself from and proclaim its independence of the prevailing narrative mode, familiar from Homeric epic and Pindaric lyric poetry. At the same time, as John Herington has convincingly stressed (1985), the drama necessarily incorporated other poetic genres within itself. Needless to say, the earliest dramatists engaged in considerable experimentation, much of which is lost to us now. But we do have some of the works of Aeschylus and, with regard to changes

of time and place, he seems to have been more adventuresome than his successors Sophocles and Euripides. This would seem to undermine my contention that tragedy's temporal and spatial limitation originated from a desire to avoid endangering the precarious dramatic illusion. And, in fact, both Oliver Taplin (1977: 104–5; 1986: 165) and Nick Lowe (2000: 164) contrast the practice of Sophocles and Euripides, on the one hand, with that of Aeschylus and Old Comedy, on the other, both suggesting that tragedy and comedy gradually differentiated themselves in this regard over the course of the fifth century.¹⁷ They are undoubtedly right to do so, but that does not invalidate the point made above, that inherent in the dramatic mode is a deep-seated resistance to changes of time and place. For even in the (admittedly limited) evidence we have for Aeschylean practice, those changes are only occasional and, with the exception of the special case of *Women of Aetna* (this chapter, n. 15), do not occur repeatedly within a play. The contrast between even *Eumenides*, in which there is one very striking change of location accompanied by an explicitly marked lapse of time, and the conventions of traditional narrative is great. Aeschylus clearly wanted, for specific dramatic reasons, to set his play partly at Delphi and partly in Athens, and he was willing to risk the threat to the dramatic illusion to do so. What he could not do was follow the conventions of Homeric narrative and dramatize Orestes' movements from Argos to Delphi, from Delphi by wandering over land and sea (*Eumenides* 75–77, 240) to Athens, and from Athens safely back to Argos (764). All of that can be predicted or mentioned in retrospect, that is, can be conveyed using the traditional methods of narrative. But to inflict a dramatized version of that progress through time and space on an audience not yet familiar with *Das Rheingold* or *Peer Gynt* would be to tempt the audience to incredulity, which is fatal to serious drama.

Comedy, of course, is another matter. Aristophanes is not committed to ensuring the maintenance of the illusion that this man on stage wearing a prominent phallus is “really” a wasp or that that man onstage is “really” a cloud. Proof of this, if proof is needed, comes when this man with the prominent phallus speaks of himself as Aristophanes (*Wasps* 1284–91) and that man in the cloud costume does the same (*Clouds* 518–62).¹⁸ Oliver Taplin (1986: 165) is right to warn us that “we must beware of being forced into a false dichotomy between the artifact's pretending that it is reality and the artifact's positive proclamation that it is ‘only’ artifice.” Clearly the distinction between tragedy and comedy is one of degree rather than of kind when it comes to the maintenance of the illusion. But I am not as uncomfortable as Taplin is about the use of the word “illusion.”¹⁹ This is the word, after all, that magicians today use to refer to the

effects that they produce before audiences. Just as no one in the audience imagines that the illusionist is “really” sawing his assistant in half, so no one in Aeschylus’ audience was convinced that the actor playing Cassandra was “really” walking to his death when he entered the scene building. That does not diminish the illusion, or suggest that “illusion” is not quite the right word. The illusion produced by the magician, however, is more like that seen on the comic than on the tragic stage, for at the end of the trick the assistant must be shown in one piece, precisely to confirm that what was seen was indeed an illusion. At the end of the tragedy, Ajax is still dead, and Oedipus remains blind.

Taplin does, in fact, speak of being “temporarily charmed away” by the “spell” produced by tragedy, and he approves of “what Gorgias and others have to say about the ἀπάτη and ψυχαγωγία of tragedy” (1986: 164). But, while Gorgias speaks of ἀπάτη, “deception,” in connection with tragedy, he does not speak of tragedy in terms of “spells.”²⁰ For Gorgias, the ability to cast a spell, to persuade the mind, is inherent in speech (*logos*) in general, of which poetry is a division and tragedy a subdivision. Another division of speech consists of charms and incantations, which delude the soul and deceive the mind. In his *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias juxtaposes these two divisions of speech (sections 9–10) in the course of his discussion of the power of *logos*, which has the same power to affect the soul that drugs have to affect the body (section 14). Gorgias’ purpose in all this is to exculpate Helen, who should be excused for running off with Paris on the grounds that the power of language is irresistible.

It is in another context entirely that Gorgias speaks of tragedy. Unfortunately, we do not know what that context was. We have only a quotation or paraphrase given by Plutarch, who is writing 500 years after the lifetime of Gorgias. According to Plutarch (*On the Fame of the Athenians* 348c), Gorgias said that Attic tragedy uses the experiences of mythical figures to effect

a deception (ἀπάτη) in which the person who effected the deception is more honorable (δικαιότερος) than the person who did not, and the person who was deceived is more enlightened (σοφώτερος) than the person who was not deceived. The person who effected the deception is more honorable in that he has fulfilled his commitment (literally: “has done what he promised”). The person who was deceived is more enlightened, since that which is not lacking in sensitivity is easily captivated by a delight in words.

It is likely that no more than the first sentence, which Plutarch quotes in the identical wording also at *How the Young Man Should*

Listen to Poetry (15d), is a direct quotation from Gorgias (Buchheim 1989: 199); whether the following explanation of the provocative and seemingly paradoxical statement, which is couched in Plutarch's language, fairly represents Gorgias' thinking is uncertain. Clearly what Gorgias says about tragedy is fundamentally different from – but not necessarily incompatible with – what he says in the *Encomium of Helen* about the irresistible deceptiveness of language in general. For no one would wish to argue that the man who deceived you regarding the quality of the used car that he has sold to you is more honorable than the salesman who did not deceive you. Nor would anyone argue that the smarter you are, the more likely you are to be deceived by the salesman. Under ordinary circumstances, the deceiver is regarded as dishonest, and the wise are less, not more, susceptible to deception than the ignorant.²¹ For Gorgias, then, tragedy is clearly a special type of communication. Tragedy involves language, but it is perhaps significant that the only reference to language appears in Plutarch's explanation ("delight in words"). Gorgias may well have recognized that the "deception" in which tragedy engages is more than merely verbal. Gorgias is known to have theorized about the nature of vision, which is the subject of fragments 4 and 5 Diels–Kranz. The first of these is a quotation from Plato's *Meno* (76a–e), in which Socrates' interlocutor, a follower of Gorgias from Thessaly, approves of a definition of color that is given by Socrates, a definition that Socrates describes as "in the manner of Gorgias" and also, rather mysteriously, as "tragic."²²

It is surely also significant that Gorgias confines his comments to tragedy. He is not here speaking of tragedy as representative of drama or of poetry in general, as most critics assume he is doing.²³ He is speaking, if Plutarch can be trusted, specifically of tragedy. And there is a significant distinction between what is asserted of tragedy and what Gorgias asserts of language in general, which includes the language of poetry, in the *Encomium of Helen*.²⁴ In the latter, language (*logos*) is an irresistible, all-powerful dictator; in Gorgias' account of tragedy, however, the possibility of the failure of tragedy to deceive is envisioned. This has not been sufficiently appreciated by critics. Gorgias speaks not only of "the person who effected the deception" (ὁ ἀπατήσας) but also of "the person who did not" (ὁ μὴ ἀπατήσας). Likewise, he speaks not only of "the person who was deceived" (ὁ ἀπατηθείς) but also of "the person who was not deceived" (ὁ μὴ ἀπατηθείς). Why has he expressed himself in this way (assuming, as most scholars do, that Plutarch has accurately reproduced Gorgias' wording)? To begin with, it should be noted that Gorgias uses the aorist participle, rather than the present, so that the usual translations either are not quite adequate or are downright misleading.²⁵ Mario

Untersteiner (1961: 143) seems to have been the only scholar who has been sensitive to the tense of the participle, translating “*chi riesce*,” in effect “he who succeeds (in deceiving).” Untersteiner’s translation alone recognizes the force of the aorist tense. Gorgias would have used the present tense if he had wanted to convey “the person who engages in deception” or “who habitually attempts to deceive.” Instead he has used the aorist, which implies the successful completion of the attempt, or of the repeated attempts, at deception. Similarly, Gorgias has used the aorist participle to designate “the person who did not deceive” and “the person who was (not) deceived.”²⁶ Further, he says that “the person who effected the deception is more honorable than the person who did not,” when all he needed to say was “the person who effected the deception is honorable,” which is sufficiently paradoxical on its own. The only reasonable explanation for his introduction of the comparison with “the person who did not deceive” (and, later, with “the person who was not deceived”) is because he is contrasting successful and unsuccessful efforts at deception.

Two potential causes of an unsuccessful attempt at deception seem to be envisioned: culpable incompetence on the part of the would-be deceiver and lack of sophistication on the part of the victim of the attempted deception. In the first instance, the would-be deceiver has failed to make good on his promise; in the second, the victim (or, more accurately, the beneficiary) of the attempted deception is just too dull to recognize what the situation is. As Robert Wardy has expressed it, “we should conceive of the theatrical experience as a sort of contractual deception, relying on cooperation between the deceptive tragedian and the receptively deceived audience.”²⁷ Wardy does not, however, follow his own advice, that “we must proceed with great caution in tracing out” the implications of Gorgias’ insight, for he continues (36–37) by referring repeatedly to the “fictions” that the theater purveys. He is referring not to the theatrical “fiction” that the place before us is the Thracian coast, that the man on stage is “really” the ghost of Polydorus, and that today is the third day after the fall of Troy. He is using the term “fiction” in the wide sense that allows him to broaden out Gorgias’ reference to works of literary creation in general. (And, like Oliver Taplin, he refers to “the willing suspension of disbelief” as though that formulation was intended specifically to refer to the theater.) But the “fiction” – not really a useful term in this connection – that characterizes, say, Homer’s account of Odysseus’ travels or Pindar’s lyrical treatment of the voyage of the *Argo* in *Pythian* 4 is of a fundamentally different order from what is involved in the serious theater, which Wardy aptly characterizes as “an institution regulated by cultural conventions which define and guide

its fictions.” It is this fundamental distinction that Gorgias addresses with the limitation of his comments specifically to tragedy. For neither Homer nor Pindar can be said to have made a promise or a commitment to the audience; rather, each begins his poem by invoking the authority of the Muse, implying that what is to follow is to be attributed to divine inspiration. (To call that a “fiction” is a questionable procedure and may even have struck a contemporary as nothing short of blasphemous.) Nor is it clear in what sense it would be appropriate to speak of a dullard as “not deceived” by Homer’s or Pindar’s creations. On the contrary, it is the height of sophistication to see through the devious devices of the poet.

Gorgias’ statement is clear and consistent only if he intends it to refer strictly to tragedy, not to poetry in general or even to drama. For what Gorgias has to say is relevant to the distinction between tragedy and comedy. In order for the deception to be successful it must be consistently upheld, and that is the case, as we have seen, for tragedy but not for comedy, in which the same onstage figure can be at one time a cloud and at a later time the poet himself. For this very reason, as we noted in Chapter 3 (p. 49), the comic poet, but not the tragic, can invoke the Muse. Not even a dullard is likely to have stood up in the course of a comic performance and said, “That’s not Aristophanes – that’s a cloud!” And even if he did, that would only have added to the audience’s amusement. On the other hand, the entire theatrical experience would have been disastrously undone if someone in the audience had stood up at the start of Euripides’ *Hecuba* and said, “That’s not the ghost of Polydorus – that’s Dionysius of Icaria! He’s my neighbor.” It is this person whom Gorgias identifies as the person who is incapable of being “deceived” by tragedy. He just doesn’t get it. He may also be thoroughly insensitive to the charms of Sappho’s verse, but he would not therefore be described as failing to be “deceived” by them. Likewise, it would not be appropriate to describe him as failing to be “deceived” by the chorus member’s cloud costume, because no serious attempt at deception was undertaken. It might be objected that Aristophanic Old Comedy is populated not only with (talking) clouds and wasps and birds, but also with ordinary human characters, like Diceaopolis and Myrrhine. Can one not speak in these cases of “fiction” and “deception”? I think the answers are “Yes” and “No.” Manifestly Diceaopolis and Myrrhine are fictitious characters, created by Aristophanes. But they were not created to deceive, any more than the characters of Socrates in *Clouds* or Euripides in *Thesmophoriazusae* were intended by the poet to cause the audience to imagine that Socrates and Euripides were “really” speaking from the stage. Comedy permits, even encourages, fiction. Characters and plots are acknowledged to be “made up.” And even characters who are not

made up, like Socrates or Euripides or Dionysus in *Frogs*, are made to be involved in situations that are clearly intended as fictions.

“Fiction” is not something that Attic tragedy is normally felt to engage in. Aristotle singles out for special comment the one tragedy that is known to have had an invented plot and characters, the apparently experimental *Antheus* of Agathon. It is true that, in the passage in which Aristotle makes mention of Agathon’s tragedy (*Poetics* 1451b15–23), he also says that, in general, tragedies have “one or two” characters whose names are familiar, while “the rest are made up.” This is not, however, borne out by the evidence of the surviving plays. Only occasionally are named tragic characters obviously creations of the poet himself, like Thoas in Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris* or Theonoe and Theoclymenus in his *Helen*. But it goes without saying that the Taurians and the Egyptians can be expected to have kings, and the poet can be permitted to call them by names that reflect their characters. For the most part, slaves and nurses in tragedy remain nameless, unlike some of their comic counterparts.²⁸ No one doubts that royal personages are surrounded by an entourage of attendants, so no one will be surprised to see and hear Phaedra’s confidante or Hippolytus’ groom interacting on stage with their masters. Those masters are, in almost every instance in surviving tragedy, recognizable figures from traditional myth (or, in the case of Aeschylus’ *Persians*, real historical persons). And it is “through the experiences of mythical figures” that, according to Plutarch, Gorgias claims tragic deception to operate.²⁹ Mythical figures and their experiences were not felt to be “fictional,” like the characters in comedy or like those in Agathon’s *Antheus*. Even the hardheaded historian Thucydides treats Minos, Agamemnon, and other individuals named in the Homeric poems as historical figures, and bases rational arguments on what they are traditionally said to have done (1.8–11). He acknowledges that Homer is not necessarily a reliable source, being a poet and therefore liable to embellishment (1.10.3), but he never suggests that the major figures of myth are figments of the poetic tradition.

How, then, does tragedy, according to Gorgias, create a deception “through the experiences of mythical figures”? Not, clearly, by fabricating those figures. And not by taking traditional figures and manufacturing new stories in which they appear. For that could be said of other poets as well, like Pindar, Stesichorus, and perhaps even Homer himself. Fifth-century comedy does not generally base its plots on the traditional experiences of mythical figures.³⁰ What is unique about tragedy, and what Gorgias was perceptive enough to recognize, is that its aim is to “deceive” its audience by causing the audience to imagine that the experiences of mythical figures are taking place

before their very eyes. The success of this deceit, and the contrasting lack of an attempt at such deceit in comedy, is illustrated – literally – by the evidence of vase painting. For, as Andrew Stewart (2008: 266–67) has noted of the fourth-century artists, “Whereas many comic scenes on western Greek vases clearly illustrate real plays, for they include the stage itself ... none of the supposed tragic ones ... does so.” What Stewart says in his next sentence, however, does not follow: “This distinction seriously undercuts the latter’s claim to illustrate real tragic performances.” Rather, this distinction provides further evidence of the difference between comedy and tragedy for, while the former is happy to break the dramatic illusion, the latter is not. This is the conclusion that J.R. Green comes to on the basis of a thorough examination of fifth-century vases depicting scenes from the theater (1991: 40):

Comedy, with its frequent rupture of “dramatic illusion,” was seen literally, as men dressed up being funny. Tragedy, on the other hand, constantly maintained the illusion, and in fact could not risk breaking it. At one level, the figures seen in the theatre re-created myth-history and they were to that degree “real.” When the vase-painter showed them, he therefore showed them as real. The vase-painter’s figures are what the poet intended them to be, re-creations of the subjects of the drama.

There is no reason why a depiction of, say, the events most memorably enacted in Euripides’ *Medea* should show the stage, costumes, masks, and so on any more than an illustration of an episode from the *Iliad* should show Homer performing. What the artist portrays in either instance is a supposedly historical event that took place on the battlefield before Troy or at the palace of the Corinthian king. If the artist wants to make clear that the version depicted is inspired by Homer or Euripides (or Stesichorus, Neophron, or Eumelus), he does that by presenting recognizable features of that version, not by depicting the scene as a highlight of a tragic or epic poem. The whole point of tragedy is to present mythical events unmediated by the narration of a bard. The success of the genre is attested precisely by the way that vase painters show “tragic” characters in “real” settings, with temples, caves, and uneven terrain, rather than on a stage wearing buskins and masks (Csapo 2010: 3–5). The artists are interested in showing Jason and Medea, not two actors impersonating Jason and Medea, in the same way that artists depicting the encounter between Achilles and Penthesilea are not interested in portraying a performance of the *Aethiopis*. There can be little doubt that the fourth-century artist whose neck amphora in the Getty Museum is illustrated by Taplin (2007: 56–57) is depicting the scene in Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* in which Orestes kills his mother.

She is shown baring her breast, and a snake-entwined Fury is shown behind her, illustrating the warning that she utters as she pleads for her life. Orestes is shown wearing a traveler's hat and boots, conveying the fact that he has just journeyed from Phocis. But he is otherwise shown naked, as he would not have appeared on the stage; and, of course, Clytaemestra's bared breast could not have been shown on stage, if for no other reason than that she was played by a male actor. Further, the ground is depicted as uneven, as though the scene is imagined to have taken place out of doors, but not on the level surface of the outdoor theater, and the Fury was not seen in the theater, but only spoken of. What the artist has shown is the killing of Clytaemestra by Orestes, as the viewer would have known it from a familiarity with Aeschylus' dramatization, just as the artist depicting the ransom of Hector shows that event as known from the narrative in Book Twenty-Four of the *Iliad*. There is no need to show the bard with his cithara, even though those were indispensable features of the experience of the poem. Likewise, there is no need to show Aeschylus, the stage, or the actor who played Clytaemestra. This is not about him. It is about her.

For a man in fifth-century Athens to impersonate a woman before a large audience of fellow citizens was a high-stakes endeavor. Even the impersonation of Agamemnon, Ajax, or Apollo would inevitably have courted the risk of failing to "deceive." But the magnitude of the risk is an indicator of the gains to be won by successfully representing Clytaemestra or Agamemnon in the theater, who can for the first time interact with each other before the eyes of an audience. This is the peculiar power of the drama, a power to which Gorgias was peculiarly sensitive. We saw in Chapter 4 (p. 61) that it was proverbial to accuse poets in general of spreading lies. But this is not the source of the deception that Gorgias identifies in tragedy. Nor, for all the ridicule to which Aristophanes subjects Euripides and other tragic poets, is it falsehood (*ψεῦδος*) of which he accuses them. As far as I can tell, only on one occasion is a word from this root applied to a tragic poet in Aristophanes' plays, when Aeschylus, having defeated his younger rival, tells Pluto never to let Euripides, "that scoundrel, that liar (*ψευδολόγος*), that clown," sit on Aeschylus' newly won throne (*Frogs* 1520–21). Here, it is not Euripides' poetic output that is charged with falsehood but Euripides' person, who claims – falsely, according to Aeschylus – to deserve the Throne of Tragedy (769). In the course of the contest in *Frogs* between Aeschylus and Euripides, which contains much vitriolic vituperation, neither poet charges the other with falsehood. Rather, on two occasions "deception" (*ἀπάτη*) is attributed to the older poet. We have in Chapter 4 (pp. 61–62) looked at the passage in which Euripides accuses Aeschylus of engaging in fraud

and deception (ἐξηπάτα, 910) by bringing characters on stage who are silent for long periods, and we noted that Dionysus expressed his pleasure at being thus “deceived.” Later in the play, when the two poets “weigh” their verses against one another’s, Dionysus proclaims Aeschylus the victor in that round of the contest on the grounds that he “tricked” (ἐξηπάτηκεν, 1404) his younger rival by slipping two chariots and two corpses into one line of verse. On these two occasions, then, when words from the root of the word ἀπάτη occur and are applied to Aeschylus, the god of the drama himself expresses his approval. Eventually, in fact, Aeschylus is awarded victory in the tragic contest. On the only two other occasions in the play when words from this root are used, they are used not in a dramatic context but with reference to the political life of the city, and in both instances the deception involved is clearly condemned. Dionysus refers (1068) to the rich man who uses deception, dressing in rags in order to avoid a trierarchy, having learned to do this from watching Euripides’ plays. Similarly, Aeschylus complains that the citizens have learned bad habits from Euripidean plays, habits that include (1086) constantly deceiving the people. In this way, the evidence from Aristophanes supports our reading of Gorgias’ claim regarding deception, that it is praiseworthy only in the context of tragic performance.

Those who have preferred to take Gorgias’ comment to refer not exclusively to tragedy but to poetry in general (see n. 23, this chapter) have in some cases used in support of their position an anecdote that Plutarch relates immediately before one of his two quotations of Gorgias’ statement about tragedy and deception (*How the Young Man Should Listen to Poetry* 15c):

For (γάρ) the deceptive element of it [sc. poetry] does not catch on in the case of those who are totally ignorant and lacking in sense. For this reason, when someone asked Simonides, “Why are the Thessalians the only ones whom you do not deceive (ἐξαπατᾷς)?” he replied, “Because they are too backward to be deceived (ἐξαπατᾶσθαι) by me.”

Before we begin to make sense of this anecdote and its possible connection with what Gorgias says about tragedy, we need to understand the context in which Plutarch recounts it. The quotation from Gorgias is combined with the anecdote concerning Simonides to “explain” (γάρ) the immediately preceding quotation from Homer. The quotation from Homer (*Iliad* 14.216–17), however, has nothing to do with either tragedy or poetry. It is, rather, from the description of the embroidery on the brassiere of Aphrodite, which depicts, among other delightful things, “Seduction, who steals away the wits even from those who are especially clever.” (This quotation, in turn, is

introduced by Plutarch to amplify yet another Homeric quotation, from the *Odyssey*, which has to do with the availability of drugs in Egypt, whose effects Plutarch – but not Homer – likens to the effects of poetry.) Even if the lines from the *Iliad* were concerned with the effects of poetry, the two sayings attributed to Gorgias and Simonides do not serve to explain them. For there is no suggestion that the effects of Seduction are *confined* to the wits of those who are especially clever. Rather, according to Homer, *even those* who ought to be most resistant to her charms must yield, the implication being that those who are less well-endowed intellectually are easy prey. The sayings of Gorgias and Simonides, by contrast, affirm that it is precisely those who are less well-endowed intellectually who are most resistant.

Clearly, Plutarch's train of thought here is not compelling. He has combined quotations from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with *bons mots* attributed to two Classical figures in a rhetorical fashion that serves, among other things, to illustrate his broad learning. Among the surviving works of Plutarch there are collections of anecdotes that seem to have been compiled precisely to serve as resources for just this purpose (Ziegler 1964: 226–28), and here Plutarch has drawn on some such repository for his materials. That does not mean, of course, that the sayings of Gorgias and Simonides are unrelated to one another, only that a relationship between them cannot be assumed but must be demonstrated. To begin with, we know that a large number of anecdotes circulated in antiquity that purported to concern themselves with Simonides (Bell 1978; Lefkowitz 1981: 49–56; Page 1962: 320–23). In Xenophon's *Hiero*, we have a fictitious dialogue between the poet and the Syracusan tyrant, and there survives a papyrus fragment of a collection of sayings of Simonides, written in the third century after Christ (Grenfell and Hunt 1906: 64–66). It is impossible to know which, if any, of these many anecdotes are authentic, and scholars have sometimes felt free to assign them to other figures to whom they seem more appropriate. And so Wilamowitz (1913: 143) suggested, with characteristic confidence, that our anecdote about the Thessalians' imperviousness to deception has been transferred by an oversight to Simonides from Gorgias, who also spent time in Thessaly. But the oversight cannot have been Plutarch's, since in his text the one anecdote follows the other immediately. If Wilamowitz is correct, we would have to assume that two anecdotes about Gorgias had become separated in the transmission, one of which became misattributed to Simonides, and that Plutarch reunited them without being aware of the correct attribution.

There are other reasons to reject Wilamowitz' assignment of the story to Gorgias. Gorgias was neither a tragedian nor a poet. If he

failed to deceive the Thessalians, it can only have been with his oratory, an admission he is not likely to have made, both because it would diminish his standing as a speaker and because it would contradict his claim in the *Encomium of Helen* of the limitless power of the spoken word. By the same token, it is difficult to take the story seriously as an authentic statement by Simonides, as Marcel Detienne (1996: 108) appears to do, for Simonides can hardly have claimed that the Thessalians were too boorish for him to “deceive” when a Thessalian potentate was among his most prominent patrons.³¹ The appropriate context for the anecdote is after the lifetime of Simonides, even, perhaps, after the lifetime of Gorgias, when it became common to speak of poets using the vocabulary of “deception.” There appears to be only one occurrence of a form of the word ἀπάτη in connection with poetry in general (as opposed to tragedy in particular) securely datable to any time earlier than the last book of Plato’s *Republic*.³² That is in Pindar’s *First Olympian*, when the poet, criticizing earlier versions of the story concerning Pelops, says that “stories can be deceptive through their use of intricate lies” (ψεύδεσιποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι, 29). This passage is unusual in another respect, in that “stories” here appears to be in apposition with φάτις (Gerber 1982: 61–62), a word that means “rumor” or “divine utterance” (Fournier 1946: 9, 226–27) but is rarely found in connection with poetry. Otherwise, the association of ἀπάτη and poetry is a notion very much at home in Plato’s developed view of poetry and other arts as forms of “imitation,” something to be condemned on the grounds that the arts involve the creator as representing him or herself as possessing a knowledge that he or she does not in fact possess. And so, one has been deceived (ἐξηπατήθη, *Republic* 598d) as if by a sorcerer when one sees a painting of a craftsman made by a painter who is ignorant of the craft he is representing. Similarly, witnesses to performances of tragedies and of the works of Homer are deceived (ἐξηπάτηνται, 598e) by their representations of representations of reality. Likewise, at the beginning of Book 12 of Plato’s *Laws*, the visitor from Athens cautions against any one of the citizens of the model *polis* being deceived (ἐξαπατῶμενος, 941b) by poets or other purveyors of stories into thinking that the gods are guilty of any wrongdoing. The influence of Plato’s attitude toward poetry is clear from a fragment of Aristoxenus, a pupil of Plato’s pupil Aristotle.³³ He tells of a fourth-century musician, Telesias of Thebes, whose education consisted of training in the finest compositions of earlier artists like Pindar and Pratinas, but who was later captivated (ἐξαπατηθῆναι) by the intricate music of the theater.

This, then, is the context in which the anecdote concerning Simonides and the Thessalians is likely to have arisen, the context of

the fourth century or later, a time when the idea of a poet as an artist who engages in deception had gained currency. All that is required for the story to be *ben trovato* is a famous poet and a provincial community with which the poet is known to have been associated. Simonides and Thessaly certainly qualify in that regard. For all we know, it may have been an anecdote designed to illustrate the lack of sophistication of the Thessalians, and the sophisticated Simonides, who was the subject of numerous anecdotes and who was known to have had Thessalian connections, was a logical figure to use as a foil. In any event, what is clear from the anecdote is that Thessalian stupidity is illustrated through the Thessalians' imperviousness to deception. This is, of course, paradoxical, and it carries the equally paradoxical implication that intelligent people are more, rather than less, liable to deception. This is precisely what is sometimes asserted of the Athenians, that they are at the same time the most intelligent of the Greeks and that they are easily deceived. In Plato's *Apology* (29d), Socrates characterizes Athens as the "greatest city and the one with the best reputation for wisdom and power." In the *Protagoras* (319b), Socrates says that, like the Greeks in general, he regards the Athenians as wise. Elsewhere, Plato attributes similar sentiments to someone who was not, like Socrates, a citizen of Athens: According to Hippias of Elis (*Protagoras* 337d), Athens is the veritable capital of Greece when it comes to wisdom. Plato was himself, of course, a citizen of Athens, so he may not be an unprejudiced witness, although, given his disdain for the intelligence of his fellow citizens, a degree of irony cannot be ruled out. At any rate, even if his praise of Athenian wisdom is ironic, there would be no point in his making these statements if they did not reflect a commonly held view. Like Plato, Euripides too was an Athenian citizen, and his tragedies were written for performance before an Athenian audience. In the Erechtheidae ode in his *Medea*, he has the chorus of Corinthian women praise the Athenians for "being nurtured by the most renowned wisdom" (827–28). Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus, asserts that the Athenians "are said to be the foremost of the Greeks for wisdom" (1.60.3). The context in which he records this view is especially interesting. He is recounting the story of Peisistratus' return to power, a story involving what Herodotus considers the silliest stratagem imaginable: Peisistratus and his supporters dressed up an especially tall and attractive woman, who impersonated the goddess Athena escorting her protégé to the Acropolis and encouraging the citizens to welcome Peisistratus back. Herodotus expresses surprise that the Athenians, who are the cleverest of the Greeks, who are themselves the cleverest of people, could be taken in by such a childish ruse.

Whether this anecdote is historically accurate is irrelevant. What is

significant is that it represents the Athenians both as the cleverest of the Greeks and as being easily deceived, the deception involving a disguise and an impersonation of a rather “theatrical” nature.³⁴ Interestingly, Cleon in Thucydides taunts the Athenians as being “the best at being deceived” (ἀπατάσθαι ἄριστοι, 3.38.5). Similarly, the chorus of Athenian knights in Aristophanes’ comedy say of the Athenian Demos, the personification of the collective people of Athens, that it is “easily led astray” and that it “delights in being flattered and deceived” (ἐξαπατῶμενος, *Knights* 1115–17; cf. 1345). One of the deceivers of Demos is Paphlagon, who is manifestly intended by Aristophanes to represent none other than Cleon himself. Demos defends himself precisely by claiming “wisdom” (1141) in appearing to allow himself to be deceived. It would seem, then, that fifth-century Athenians had adopted a self-image that encouraged the view of them as simultaneously sophisticated and delighting in being deceived, and the latter can in turn be attributed to their very sophistication. Gorgias clearly understood this, and it is this understanding that underlies his claim that the person who was deceived by a tragic performance is more enlightened (σοφώτερος) than the person who was not deceived. The Athenians, after all, the most enlightened of the Greeks, were the inventors of the serious theater, which requires a sophisticated collusion on the part of the audience in the deception that the drama creates.

Disguise, deception, an acknowledgment of the superior wisdom of the Athenians, and even the contrast with the Thessalians’ hebetude lie at the heart of a passage in Plato’s *Crito*, with which it will be appropriate to conclude this chapter. In the dialogue, Socrates’ friend Crito visits him in prison and tries to persuade him to allow himself to be rescued from prison, suggesting that he can go to Thessaly, where Crito has friends who will be happy to take care of him and keep him safe (45c). Later in the dialogue, as part of his explanation of his refusal to accept Crito’s offer, Socrates adopts the persona of the Laws of Athens, who upbraid Socrates for even considering violating the implicit agreement he made with the Laws when he declined to leave Athens at any previous time in his life. The Laws ask Socrates, whose life has been spent interacting with the most intellectually accomplished of the Athenians, whether his life will be worth living if he goes to some other city, where the citizens will inevitably provide less stimulating conversation. They point out (53d) that if he runs off to Thessaly and stays with Crito’s friends, he will find himself in a place characterized by extreme disorder and license, and they imagine Socrates regaling his hosts with his silly stories of how he escaped from prison by putting on some kind of disguise. The word used for “putting on a disguise,” ἐνσκευάζεσθαι, is a word found only here in

Plato and rarely outside the writers of comedy in the Classical period, and it is used by Aristophanes' Dicaeopolis just before he goes off to visit Euripides, from whom he hopes to borrow a tragic costume (*Acharnians* 384). Naturally, disguising himself and playing a part in a drama, whether on stage or in "real life," is anathema to Socrates (and to Plato). The implication, however, is that the Athenians, the most sophisticated of the Greeks and the inhabitants of the only city worth living in for someone like Socrates, can easily be taken in by a deceptive disguise, which fact the Thessalians, who are too stupid to be so easily duped, find endlessly amusing.

¹ Lowe (2000: 157–58). The cinema also, of course, has roots in the art of photography, which, like the novel, expresses itself in the past tense. See Metz (1985) for perceptive comments on the way in which a photograph represents a dead moment in time, in contrast to the living present conveyed by the cinema (and, I would add, the drama).

² See, for example, Herington (1985), O. Murray (1990), Stehle (1997), Taplin (2000), Calame (2005), Hornblower and Morgan (2007), and Revermann and Wilson (2008).

³ Griffin (1991), Arieti (1992), and de Jong (1992).

⁴ Herington (1985: 10), who continues by saying that "the difference is that they mix all of them together in a single work." See Chapter 4, p. 58.

⁵ See de Jong (2004a: 6–7) for a brief criticism of this approach.

⁶ Gould (2001: 325). It is not at all clear why Gould restricts himself to tragic drama. Presumably the same ought to be true of comedy, which Gould ignores. Compare Goward (1999: 11): "At a fundamental level, narrative and drama are indistinguishable."

⁷ Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "In a Grove," originally published in 1921, available in English translation by T. Kojima in Harrison (2005: 533–39).

⁸ Heiden (1989: 71). For the significance of the argument from likelihood, see Chapter 8, pp. 159–73.

⁹ In fact, de Jong (2004b: 259) treats it as an instance of "hearsay

narration.”

¹⁰ See de Jong (1991, 2004b), Goward (1999), Barrett (2002, 2004), Lowe (2004), and Dickin (2009).

¹¹ Similarly Bal (1997: 60): “The dialogues embedded in a narrative text are dramatic in kind. The more dialogue a narrative text contains, the more dramatic that text is.”

¹² Of course, the messenger has no need of the Muse’s inspiration, since he is, unlike Homer, himself an eyewitness to the events he describes.

¹³ Other instances of this device can be found in the Cassandra scene in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (note the visual language and deictic expressions at 1095–97, 1114, 1125, and 1217–22), Alcestis’ death scene in Euripides’ *Alcestis* (252–62), and the moment in Euripides’ *Bacchae* (918–22) when Pentheus sees two suns, a double Thebes, and his companion Dionysus in the form of a bull. (The curious attempt by Seaford 1987 to explain these not as hallucinations but as the result of Pentheus looking into a mirror fails to account for the imagined taurine appearance of Dionysus.) Banquo’s ghost in *Macbeth*, Act III, scene iv, is another matter: He is seen by the audience as well as by Macbeth, but by no one else on stage; we readily accept this as a private vision of Macbeth’s, however, as his visions have already been well established by his “dagger of the mind” scene (Act II, scene i).

¹⁴ Spingarn (1924: 89–101) and Kappl (2006: 176). For the practice of fifth-century tragic poets with regard to time and place, see especially Taplin (1977: 103–7, 290–94, 375–79).

¹⁵ Namely in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* and Sophocles’ *Ajax*; see Garvie (1998: 195–96) and Scullion (1994: 67–88, 109–16). If the tragic *hypothesis* partially preserved in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2257 is describing the action of Aeschylus’ lost *Women of Aetna*, that play will have featured repeated changes of scene; see Poli-Palladini (2001: 289–96). *Women of Aetna*, however, was by no means typical, having been written for performance not in Athens but in Sicily.

¹⁶ This is a different matter from Shakespeare’s practice of having a prologue speaker refer to circumstances of the theater, as in

“within this wooden O” (*Henry V*) and “the two hours’ traffic of our stage” (*Romeo and Juliet*), a practice exploited and extended by, among others, Bertolt Brecht.

¹⁷ It is perhaps also the case that the introduction of the third actor onto the tragic stage and developments in the material structure of the theater, both of which seem to have occurred not long before the end of Aeschylus’ career (Taplin 1977: 452–59; Sommerstein 2010: 17–25), made changes of location less necessary and therefore less attractive, as a greater variety of personages from a variety of locations could be brought onto the stage and as a fixed stage-building made it more difficult to alter the identity of the location.

¹⁸ For other instances of this “merging” of the comic poet’s voice with that of the characters and chorus, see Bakola (2008: 4 n. 16).

¹⁹ (1986: 164–65); similarly Bain (1977: 6). Taplin is, I think, mistaken in invoking Coleridge’s “willing suspension of disbelief” in this connection. Coleridge’s formulation is constitutive of “poetic faith” (Engell and Bate 1983: 6) and is not specifically concerned with the impersonation connected with the drama.

²⁰ The word ψυχάγωγία does not appear in the surviving works or fragments of Gorgias.

²¹ Verdenius (1981: 117–18), M. Heath (1987: 40), (Garzya 1987: 250 ≈ 153), and Bons (2004: 245). There is an interesting parallel in the speech of the sophistically trained Pausanias in Plato’s *Symposium* (184e–85b): In relations between the lover and the beloved deception carries no disgrace, but in all other circumstances deception is shameful, whether it is successful or not.

²² See Sansone (1996a) for an attempt to make sense of this characterization.

²³ Van Groningen (1948: 2), Untersteiner (1954: 113–14), Lanata (1963: 204), Guthrie (1969: 271), Valgiglio (1973: 72–73), de Romilly (1973: 160–61, 1975: 4–5), Verdenius (1981: 125–27), Walsh (1984: 84–85), Hesk (2000: 146–47), Gruber (2009: 74–87), and Hunter and Russell (2011: 78). Likewise, the author of the *Dissoi Logoi* (3.10 Diels–Kranz) speaks only of tragedy and

painting when he turns to the evidence from “the crafts and the works of the poets”: Both tragic poets and painters are most successful when they create the illusion that we are actually seeing Agamemnon before our eyes.

²⁴ In the *Encomium*, Gorgias refers to “deception” only twice, when he speaks of the persuasive character of *logos* in general, which “deceives the soul” (8), and in connection with magic and sorcery, which are “things that lead the soul astray and deceive one’s judgment” (10).

²⁵ “The one who uses *apate*” (Rosenmeyer 1955: 227), “the deceiver” (George Kennedy in Sprague 1972: 65), “the one who deceives” (Wardy 1996: 36), “der Täuschende” (Diels and Kranz 1951–1952, vol. 2: 305), “plus honnête en abusant” (Frazier and Froidefond 1990: 192), “celui qui trompe” (Garzya 1987: 154), and “chi inganna” (Gallo and Mocci 1992: 57; Paduano 2004: 66).

²⁶ This use of the aorist participle, in the context of the assertion that “the person who effected the deception is more honorable (δικαιότερος),” suggests that Gorgias is enhancing the paradox by recalling an expression used in the courtrooms for “the guilty party” (ὁ ἀδίκησας) and “the victim” (ὁ ἀδικηθείς): for example, Lysias 3.15, 39, 6.15–16, 7.13, and 31.19; Antiphon 5.88 and 6.6; Demosthenes 21.30, 24.139, 31.11, 47.1, and 57.6; Isocrates 4.181 and 18.55; Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 138; Hypereides, *Against Demosthenes* frag. 8, col. 34; Plato, *Laws* 876a; and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1373a34 and 1405a26. These passages show that Wilamowitz was mistaken in saying (1905: 24), “Jede Verfehlung ist ein ἀδίκημα; so lange sie nicht gebüsst ist, dauert das ἀδικεῖν: man redet davon immer im Präsens.”

²⁷ Wardy (1996: 36). Actually, I think it is the actor rather than the tragedian whom Gorgias imagines as performing the deception. For it is the successful actor who “has fulfilled his commitment” by remaining in character. It is no more appropriate to speak of the tragic poet than the epic or lyric poet as making a commitment, whereas the character who announces himself as the ghost of Polydorus has made a compact with the audience to remain the ghost of Polydorus.

²⁸ For the naming of slaves in comedy, see Olson (1992: 309–12).

²⁹ It is not certain whether this portion of Plutarch's text derives from Gorgias. Ziegler (1937: 2012 n. 34) argues on the basis of verbal similarities with genuinely Gorgianic texts that it, too, is part of the quotation from Gorgias, but the formulation "experiences of mythical figures" (τοῖς μύθοις καὶ τοῖς πάθεσιν) is characteristic of Plutarch; cf. *Table Talk* 615a, where Plutarch says of Phrynichus and Aeschylus that they caused tragedy to advance from its Dionysiac origins εἰς μύθους καὶ πάθη.

³⁰ Lowe (2000: 88, 158). There are occasional exceptions, like Cratinus' *Nemesis* and *Dionysalexandros* (Casolari 2003: 78–112). The latter play is exceptional in another regard, apparently having a chorus consisting of satyrs and appropriating some other features of satyr play as well (Bakola 2005, 2010: 81–117; Storey 2005).

³¹ In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates and Protagoras spend a great deal of time discussing a poem by Simonides that is addressed to Scopas of Thessaly, and Cicero (in *De oratore* 2.352–53) tells a memorable story about Simonides' mnemotechnic powers that is connected with a banquet at the home of Scopas.

³² Ian Plant's (2004: 30) solution to the riddle in "Cleobulina" frag. 2 West, "I saw a man stealing and deceiving (ἐξαπατῶντα) by force, and his doing this by force was quite honorable," cannot be right. The (repeated) reference to force rules out any relationship to "deception in art."

³³ Aristoxenus frag. 76 Wehrli = Plutarch, *On Music* 1142b–c; see Barker (2007: 247–49).

³⁴ Connor (1987: 42–47), Sinos (1993), and Fadinger (2000). According to Plutarch (*Agesilaus* 38.3–4), the veteran Spartan general Agesilaus was reluctant to take the field against a numerically superior but inexperienced enemy, on the grounds that deception (ἀπάτη) is ineffective against such an adversary.

Reaction Time

We have seen, then, that the drama differs fundamentally from traditional narrative forms in two respects, one having to do with space and one having to do with time: While the performer of a narrative relates what happened in the past, the drama allows its audience the illusion of witnessing events as they are happening; while the narrator is the focus of the undivided visual and auditory attention of the audience, the drama causes the attention of the audience to be diffused, so that it may be asked simultaneously to listen to words spoken or sung by one character and concentrate visually on another part of the stage. What we have said bears repeating, since it seems to be at variance with traditional views and since it is fundamental to what follows. The distinction between the two modes as far as time is concerned is particularly noticeable in the ways in which Homer and the dramatists refer to the future, that is, to events that have not yet taken place at the point of narration or at the dramatic moment, and to the past. Naturally, a narrator can quote the words of characters in the narrative who refer to future events using the future tense, and characters in Homer, for example, often speak of the day when Troy will fall or when Odysseus will return to his home. But the Homeric narrator himself can only refer to the future using the past tense, as at the beginning of Book 11 of the *Iliad*, where the narrator describes the furious fighting, but notes that “the ditch and the broad wall of the Danaans were not going to protect them.”¹ In referring to the past, Greek authors have the option of either using one of the past tenses or using the so-called historic present, a technique already identified in antiquity as serving to impart vividness and immediacy to a narrative (“Longinus,” *On the Sublime* 25). The historic present is a common feature of messenger speeches in tragedy, especially in Euripides, in whose plays the messenger uses it “to draw his addressees into the story, to allow them to share his own experience” (de Jong 1991: 45). Interestingly, the historic present is absent from Homer and is attested in Greek only from the fifth century and later, when it becomes quite common (Lallot *et al.* 2011;

Sicking and Stork 1997). We may speculate that this technique owes its origin as a feature of serious literary narrative to the poets of Attic tragedy, whose embedded narratives were required to compete for their audiences' attention with genuine present tenses referring to genuinely present states of affairs.

Embedded narratives in drama, such as messenger speeches and choral songs, are not comparable, however, to embedded narratives in narrative texts, such as Odysseus' descriptions of his adventures in the *Odyssey* or the account given by Harpagus' herdsman to his wife in Herodotus (1.111.2–5), which, as commonly occurs in Herodotus, features historic presents. For these latter are embedded in narratives that are themselves in the past from the perspective of the over-all narrator and the audience, although they are represented as being in the present from the perspective of the internal narratees. In the drama, on the other hand, when a character engages in narration both the internal narratees and the audience in the theater are experiencing the narration simultaneously, as an event in the present time. That is, the audience in the theater and the characters on the stage listening to the narration are sharing the experience of hearing and reacting to the narration as it is unfolding. There are times when the playwright does not particularly exploit the possibilities inherent in this situation. Indeed, there is a convention in Attic drama, visible in the earliest surviving tragedy of Aeschylus and the latest of Euripides, whereby the messenger immediately announces the essence of his narrative in a line or two and then proceeds to fill in at length the details of the event that he has come to recount. In *Persians*, the messenger tells the queen and the chorus (251–52), “In one fell swoop our great prosperity has been destroyed. The flower of Persian manhood is dead and gone.” He then goes on for 200 lines describing in detail the Persian defeat at Salamis and the disastrous return of the Persian army. Similarly, in *Bacchae* the messenger announces, “Pentheus is dead, the child of the father Echion” (1030), before delivering a hundred-line account of his master's gruesome demise.² Hugo von Hofmannsthal playfully reverses this convention in his *Elektra*, when he has the Young Servant keep the onstage Electra and Chrysothemis waiting more than 25 lines to overhear the decisive confirmation that Orestes is “truly dead,” after which he immediately leaves the stage. But there are occasions in the drama, as there cannot be in a narrative mode of presentation, when the events being reported in an embedded narrative are still going on, not only from the perspective of the internal narratees but also from that of the audience as well. Poulheria Kyriakou notes, on Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1284–1499 (2006: 408), that the suspense created by the messenger's announcement of the sudden wind that has held up Orestes and Iphigenia's escape “is

enhanced because, unlike most messenger speeches, this one is delivered while the action it reports is still in progress, and there are virtually no clues as to its denouement.” In other words, Euripides has here rendered the messenger speech fully “dramatic” by making the narrated events as much a part of the ongoing action of the drama as the earlier recognition scene between Orestes and his sister. Elsewhere in Euripides, the chorus engage in lyric speculation regarding events taking place off stage *at the very moment that they are singing and dancing* (Dodds 1960: 198, on *Bacchae* 977–1032). So, at *Medea* 976–89 the Corinthian women create a verbal and musical picture of the princess receiving the deadly gifts that Medea has sent, and they imagine the destruction the gifts will bring about for the princess, for Jason, and for Medea’s children. Similarly, the women of Trozen in *Hippolytus* (769–75) sing of the suicide that Phaedra is at the very moment committing and that will immediately be announced as having occurred (777).

The unique visual component of the drama is, as we have seen in Chapter 4 (pp. 58–60), not merely an extension or an expansion of the experience of seeing and hearing a rhapsode perform the various roles required of him by the narrative text. The drama exploits both time and space in creating the essential visual experience that Aristotle refers to as *opsis*, although he regards it as a merely secondary phenomenon. The impact of the visual in the drama often relies on the fact that what the audience sees is being seen simultaneously by the characters on the stage, and the audience’s awareness of the distance between the characters on stage and the objects of the characters’ visual perception contributes to the creation of the dramatic space that is unique to the theatrical experience.³ A particularly potent example, analyzed by Karl Reinhardt (1979: 157–59), is the scene in Sophocles’ *Electra* in which the title character addresses an impassioned monologue to the urn that contains, as she thinks, the ashes of her beloved brother Orestes. The urn has been given to her by the living and as-yet-unrecognized Orestes himself, who is on stage witnessing the monologue, and whose reactions are as much a focus of the audience’s attention as the words and gestures of the speaker. For Orestes had been unaware that the person to whom he handed the urn was his sister, and his recognition that this stressed, oppressed, and shabbily dressed woman is in fact Electra only gradually comes over him in the course of her monologue.

Already in the earliest surviving play, we can see how the playwright uses the visual not merely as an embellishment of the story but also as a means of both drawing the audience into the experience of the characters and providing the audience with a discrete perspective on that experience. In Aeschylus’ *Persians*, the effects of

the messenger's revelations regarding the fate of the army are so devastating to the queen and the chorus that the latter make an attempt to raise up the ghost of Darius so that they might receive advice and guidance from him. This scene is notable for the high concentration of what Edith Hall (1996: 20) calls "exotic visual stimulation," including

the pouring of an elaborate libation, prayers, a necromantic sequence involving the beating and scratching of the ground, the appearance and disappearance of a deified ghost from Hades, complete with Persian royal regalia. ...

But there is much more to this scene than what meets the enthralled eye. As the chorus invoke the spirit of Darius, our attention is divided between, on the one hand, watching and hearing their song and dance and, on the other, looking in anticipation at the tomb that the chorus are addressing and from which the ghost of Darius is expected to appear. We share in the feeling of awed expectancy that the queen and the chorus experience as they, and we, wait to see if the invocation of the dead will be successful. That feeling is intensified in brilliant fashion by Aeschylus at the point at which the ghost of Darius actually appears. The visual impact of this scene on the Athenian audience of 472 BC must have been profound, but not merely because of the dazzling spectacle of the ghost of the former Persian king arising from behind his tomb. When Darius appears and addresses the chorus, asking them why they have summoned him from the land of the dead, they can neither answer him nor even look upon him, such is the feeling of dread that has come over them.⁴

How, then, is it possible for us, ordinary citizens of Athens, to look upon this awe-inspiring apparition when the chorus of Persian elders, who were privileged to converse with King Darius while he lived, cannot bear to do so? Aeschylus supplies the answer to this dilemma in the person of the Persian queen, Darius' widow, who is on stage along with the members of the chorus. When the latter fail to respond to the ghost's repeated requests for information, he turns to his aged consort, who is able to engage with him in conversation for over 80 lines (703–86). If anything remotely like this scene had ever been produced for a human audience before 472 BC, it can only have been in the very recent past, in the Theater of Dionysus, after the introduction of the second actor. For none of this can be conveyed in a narrative format, as it depends for its full effect on a manipulation of time and space that is possible only in the theater. A narrative can, of course, create a buildup of suspense by anticipating and delaying an outcome, but only in the drama can a feeling of suspense be simultaneously experienced by the audience and observed as being

experienced by the cast of characters. The experience is shared between audience and actors, but the very space that separates them creates a fragmentation that engenders in the audience a type of involvement that had never before been a feature of literary expression. In this scene in Aeschylus' earliest surviving play, we have not only a fragmentation that separates an audience, who can look upon a spectral king, from a chorus, who cannot, but also a division in the acting area between a chorus and an actor whose reactions to an event that they witness are visibly differentiated. For the queen is plainly facing the ghost of Darius as she converses with him, while the chorus have conspicuously turned away or have averted their eyes, even if they have not actually prostrated themselves before their former master.⁵

This fragmentation, created by visibly differentiating the reactions of characters on stage to their shared apprehension of an occurrence, is a unique feature of the drama and is effectively exploited by later dramatists. After the introduction of the third actor, it becomes possible for the audience to witness two characters reacting in contrasting ways to a speech delivered by a third character, a situation that is perhaps even more intense than the differentiation between character and chorus in Aeschylus' *Persians*. This is the situation that we find in Sophocles' *Electra*, for instance, when Clytaemestra and Electra listen, with equal interest but with very different responses, to the servant's elaborate account of the death of Orestes. There is nothing in the text to indicate what those responses are. Irene de Jong (1991: 140) points out that, in a narrative text, "the gestures and miens of characters ... have to be described by the narrator," and she continues by saying that, in this respect, "Attic drama does not differ greatly from narrative, since the convention of wearing masks and the dimensions of the theatre made it necessary for all significant stage action to be incorporated in words as well." That may be the case, but regardless of whether Electra and Clytaemestra gesticulate or stand stock still, the audience cannot hear the servant's account without watching for signs of reaction from Orestes' mother and sister, something that the audience had not been called upon to do when witnessing an epic performance by a rhapsode or the singing and dancing of a dithyrambic chorus.⁶ It is one thing to be told by a narrator, or even by a character in a drama (Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 454–59), that Eteocles and Polyneices cannot bear to look at one another; it is another matter altogether for an audience to see the two brothers conspicuously avoiding making eye contact.

From the time of Aristotle until the twenty-first century, the visual aspect of the theater has all too often been relegated to a supporting role. This has been especially the case, as I have sought to show, in

the work of those narratologists who have turned their attention to the study of Attic drama. Thus, Nick Lowe can say (2004: 269),

It is in the nature of tragic performance that all significant action is in some sense unseen, and mediated through “narration” in the broadest sense: the past and future, the offstage world, states of mind, the designs of gods are all inaccessible to direct representation, and access comes only through variously problematic categories of verbal report.

On the contrary. The nature of tragic performance consists precisely in what it can show us, not in what is narrated for us. The significant action in *Phoenician Women* is not the messenger’s narrated account of the two brothers’ mutual slaughter, “dramatic” though that account undoubtedly is. That slaughter is the entirely predictable result of the encounter between Eteocles and Polyneices that we witnessed – witnessed – earlier in the play, an encounter that is not merely dramatic but also fully dramatized. Unlike, say, the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon that Homer narrates in the first book of the *Iliad*, this one plays itself out before our eyes and, equally significantly, before the eyes of Jocasta, who is as helpless as we are to prevent the destructive madness that we know will follow. Similarly, in *Bacchae*, it is surely not the dismemberment of Pentheus that constitutes that play’s “significant action,” although the narrative through which it is conveyed is among the most memorable moments in Greek drama. That dismemberment cannot, of course, be shown on stage, but can only be narrated. The confrontation between Pentheus and Dionysus earlier in the play, however, derives its significance precisely from the fact that it is not narrated, but is enacted for us, so that we can witness directly the power of the god and the powerlessness of the mighty king, playing dress-up in women’s clothing. Likewise, the aftermath of Pentheus’ dismemberment, the extraordinary scene in which Agave is brought to the realization that what she holds in her hands is not the head of a lion but that of her son, derives much of its impact from the fact that what she is holding is in fact the mask that had earlier transformed an Athenian actor into the king of Thebes (Rehm 2002: 209). Nor are the various murders, of Jason’s bride, and, later, his children, the significant actions in Euripides’ *Medea*. Those actions arise out of the confrontations between Jason and Medea, which create the situation that is dramatized in the final scene of the play. In that scene, the distance between Medea up above in her magic chariot and Jason, standing futilely before the closed gates of the palace, conveys as no verbal account can do the effect of Medea’s actions on her distraught husband.⁷

Narratologists like to distinguish between the narrative techniques of “showing” and “telling” (de Jong 2005: 620–21), which differ in regard to the degree to which the narrator intrudes into the story. But that, of course, is merely a *façon de parler*. A narrative cannot “show” anything. That is the province of the drama alone. The showing that the drama engages in, however, is not simply an insubstantial visual display, like the shadows paraded before the eyes of the immobilized denizens of the cave in Book Seven of Plato’s *Republic*. The dynamics of the theater are such that the action taking place on the stage has the effect of involving the audience in a manner that no amount of narrative “telling” or “showing” can do. Scholars who are also practitioners of the dramatic art have been in the forefront of the effort to show us, so to speak, how the theater works. In particular, Rush Rehm’s *The Play of Space* (2002) is a revelatory work that is especially sensitive to the visual and spatial characteristics of the Greek theater and the way in which the theater works to involve the spectator in the action on the stage. For example, in discussing Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers*, Rehm notes that, by having Orestes and Pylades conceal themselves so that they can observe unseen the entrance of Electra and the chorus, “Aeschylus ensures our complicity with Orestes” (86). Through this technique, “Aeschylus establishes a theatricalized irony in which we view the action with the superior knowledge shared by the play’s protagonist, *as if we had been written into the script*” (96, with emphasis added).⁸

Curiously, the audience can only be “written into the script” in this way in the case of the drama. For the bard performing a Homeric epic, whether he is speaking as narrator or quoting the words of Achilles or Andromache, is always addressing the audience rather than directing his words to an invisible Agamemnon or Hector; the “script” is always something that is being performed for us and presented to us. In the theater, on the other hand, we are addressed only in those occasional soliloquies that open plays, like that of the watchman with which *Agamemnon* begins or the more common monologues that open many Euripidean tragedies, the formulaic character of which is hilariously mocked in Aristophanes’ *lecythion* scene (*Frogs* 1198–1247). With these exceptions, which are in effect narratives, drama always involves at least three points of reference: the audience, the character speaking, and the character reacting. The audience, of course, never speaks, but it is constantly reacting. It is, therefore, continually in a position analogous to that of one or more characters of the drama, characters who at any moment can be expected to make their reaction audible or visible in the form of words or actions expressed on the stage. It is this relationship with the characters of the story, to which there is nothing comparable in the case of narrative texts, that creates

an identity between spectators and characters. In this way, then, we may say that the significant action that takes place on the tragic stage is in fact the reaction that the drama alone enacts.

To return once again to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the first book of the *Iliad*, which we have used repeatedly as representative of the narrative mode: While the bard is speaking Agamemnon's words, our attention is focused entirely upon the bard, for there is nothing else for us to hear or see. We are not called upon while Agamemnon is speaking to construct in our minds Achilles' reaction, because we are confident that, whatever Achilles' reaction may be, if it is important to the narrative, Homer will let us know after the conclusion of Agamemnon's speech. We have this confidence because earlier, at line 22, the narrator in his own voice had indicated that "all the other Achaeans approved" of Chryses' offer of ransom for his daughter – all, that is, except Agamemnon. Then, after Homer quotes Agamemnon's stern words rejecting Chryses' plea, he tells us of the old man's terrified reaction and his compliance with Agamemnon's rebuke. This is how narrative works. Indeed, this is the only way narrative can work. In the theater, on the other hand, one character's words are addressed to another character. We are confronted with the sight of Hecuba pleading with Odysseus that her daughter Polyxena be spared, and we can see the effects of Odysseus' rejection on Hecuba long before we hear the chorus' insipid two-line observation on the misfortune of finding oneself in someone else's power (Euripides, *Hecuba* 332–33). Hecuba's response is to urge Polyxena, who is on stage and whose reaction to Odysseus' refusal of Hecuba's supplication has also been witnessed, to use her own powers of persuasion on their hard-hearted Greek master. While Hecuba is addressing her daughter – while we are listening to her words and watching for Polyxena's reaction to them – we see Odysseus turn away his head and conceal his right hand (342–44), so that he cannot be subjected to the young girl's supplication. This is how the drama works.

This, again, is the "counterpoint" that we have identified as being an inherent feature of the drama. While its existence seems to have been recognized and appreciated from the start, it required experimentation and the creativity of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and undoubtedly others whose works have not survived in order for its potential to be fully explored and exploited. It is not surprising that each dramatist manipulated this counterpoint in his own distinctive way, nor is it surprising that each dramatist's technique developed over the course of his career. The way in which the three Attic tragedians used the reactions of characters on stage in creating their dramatic effects deserves separate and extended study, which it is not

my intention to supply. I have already noted Aeschylus' fondness for having characters remain silent on stage for extended periods of time, a fondness that was remarked as early as the time of Aristophanes (Chapter 4, p. 61). This recognizably Aeschylean technique depends for its effect on the visual component that distinguishes the dramatic from the narrative mode. Euripides, whom Aristophanes characterizes in contrast to Aeschylus as teaching the Athenians by his example to babble interminably (Dover 1993: 22), preferred other, more verbally profuse, means of calling attention to his characters' reactions to events. Indeed, the very focus of some scenes in Euripides is on one or more characters' reaction to a situation, a reaction that is often prolonged or delayed by characteristically Euripidean techniques. We mentioned the scene in *Bacchae* in which all our attention is drawn to Agave's response to her recognition of what we know that she and her fellow bacchantes have done on Mount Cithaeron. Her response takes the form of a gradual understanding of her dire situation, brought about through a painful stichomythic exchange with her father Cadmus, who is, like the audience, fully aware of the effect her recognition is going to have on her. There is a similar scene, and a similar stichomythic exchange, in *Heracles*, when Amphitryon guides his son back to his senses, helping him to realize that he is the murderer of his wife and children.

Reactions of a more positive nature are the focus of the recognition scenes in *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*. In his discussion of recognition (*anagnorisis*), one of the three elements of the plot of tragedy, Aristotle mentions explicitly the recognition scene in the latter play, pointing out that it involves a complex recognition: First, Orestes learns, "as a result of the dispatch of the letter," that the stranger before him is his long-lost sister, then "an additional recognition is required" before Iphigenia comes to recognize her brother (*Poetics* 1452b5–8). Because he is thinking in linear terms of "plot" (*mythos*), Aristotle concentrates on one character's reaction at a time. On the stage, however, as distinct from on the page, things are much more complex. To begin with, the scene involves, in addition to brother and sister and the ubiquitous chorus, Orestes' companion Pylades, whom Aristotle understandably omits. From the point of view of "plot," Pylades is expendable; he is merely part of the mechanism of recognition. From the point of view of the spectator in the theater, however, he is essential to the experience of the scene. It is in fact the case – which one would not guess from Aristotle's reference – that Orestes' recognition of his sister is effected through a dialogue between Iphigenia and Pylades, a dialogue to which Orestes is merely, like us, an interested witness. In the previous scene, Orestes had insisted that Pylades be spared in order to bring the unknown woman's message

back to Greece. His reasons included his selfless devotion to his dear friend and his indifference to becoming a victim to human sacrifice, inasmuch as his present existence is in any event scarcely different from a living death (687–92). In the recognition scene, still looking out for the welfare of his companion, Orestes suggests that the woman swear an oath that she will see to Pylades' safe release from the barbarian land. The woman and Pylades then embark on 30 lines of dialogue, during which time Orestes is free to contemplate his miserable existence, which is shortly to come to an end when his throat will be slit over the altar that is visible on stage.⁹ Orestes has little reason to be interested in the dialogue, which involves details of the delivery of a letter to some unknown person in Greece, which will take place after Orestes himself has met his bloody doom. Little reason, that is, until the woman reveals that the letter is to be delivered "to Orestes, son of Agamemnon" (769).

An Attic vase painted within a generation of the first performance of *Iphigenia in Tauris* suggests how this moment was, and ought to be, presented on stage:¹⁰ Iphigenia is handing the letter to Pylades while Orestes, with his back to the proceedings, is just turning his head to see if his ears are deceiving him. Also present in the painting – and in the minds of Orestes and the audience, but not on stage in the theater – are the barbarian king and a female attendant who holds the ritual implements needed for Orestes' sacrifice. The king holds out his hand toward Orestes, marking his anticipated control over the young Greek. Orestes, however, holds his own hand up, in a gesture that seems to say, "Hold everything!" For Orestes, in a moment, everything has changed. The sister who was presumed to be dead (772) is all of a sudden revealed to be alive, but she is also, it now emerges, the woman who is to preside over Orestes' sacrifice. The complex of emotions that accompanies Orestes' realization that this woman is his sister Iphigenia is something that has been germinating inside the figure on stage whom we have been watching while we have simultaneously been following the conversation between two other figures that has brought this realization about. Aristotle is right to point out that this type of recognition, one that is accompanied by a sudden alteration of circumstances, is the most appealing (*Poetics* 1452a31–32), and he refers to the recognition scene in this play on more than one occasion as an example of the most effective (κράτιστον, 1454a4–7) type of recognition and as causing extreme emotional engagement (ἔκπληξις, 1455a17–18). But he seems not to have wrestled with the question of why recognition is, along with sudden alteration of circumstances (*peripeteia*) and suffering (*pathos*), one of the three elements of the tragic (as opposed to the epic) plot. The reason would seem to be, as we can see from a consideration of

this scene in Euripides, that the audience's visual concentration upon the character who is experiencing the recognition involves the audience emotionally and intellectually in a way that cannot be replicated, indeed would not have been attempted, in a narrative mode of presentation.¹¹

But we are not finished with this complex and engaging scene. We have so far only considered Orestes' recognition of his sister; as Aristotle points out, this recognition is not simultaneous with Iphigenia's recognition of her brother, which requires separate treatment. What is simultaneous, however, with Orestes' recognition of his sister is *Pylades'* recognition that this strange woman is in fact Orestes' sister. Little is made of the effect all of this has on Pylades, as it would detract from the effect of the recognition on Orestes if our attention were directed toward Pylades' reaction as well. But Pylades is the essential agent in the even more stunning *coup de théâtre* that is to follow. Pylades has sworn a solemn oath to deliver the woman's letter to a previously unnamed Greek recipient. When he learns the name of that recipient, he immediately discharges his obligation by handing the letter to its addressee, on whose reaction to the proceedings we have been focused. As before, when we watched Iphigenia hand the letter to Pylades and at the same time kept our eyes on Orestes, mirroring his thought processes and his emotional response, so now we watch Pylades hand the letter in turn to Orestes, but the focus is this time on Iphigenia, who watches along with us. Our eyes have followed the progress of this crucial piece of stage property, which is destined to change the lives of all the characters on the stage, but our attention has been much more firmly drawn to the effect that the movement of this letter has had, first on Orestes and now on Iphigenia. Rarely in the history of the theater has there been a prop that was both more central to a drama's plot and more dispensable.¹² For Pylades had prudently taken the precaution of requiring that the woman dictate the contents of the letter to him so that he could discharge his obligation to deliver the message even in the event that a shipwreck caused the document itself to be lost. It is, then, this oral report of the letter's contents that enables Pylades to identify Orestes as the recipient and Orestes to identify its author as his sister. At this point, the material form of the words in the letter loses all its significance as far as Orestes and Pylades are concerned; at the same time, as far as Iphigenia is concerned, the safe transmission of the document is a matter of the utmost urgency. So, when Pylades immediately hands the letter to the stranger on stage, and when the stranger immediately discards the letter (793) and moves toward the woman now revealed to be his sister, we can imagine her consternation. We have, after all, been watching her with great

interest, because now it is her reaction to the situation that is of primary importance. And her reaction is to recoil from the embrace of the very man with whom she most wants to be reunited. She is the priestess of Artemis, and she is not to be touched by profane hands (798–99). The physical distance that she tries to keep between herself and the man who was earlier in the play reported to have wantonly slaughtered cattle in a fit of murderous madness will soon disappear when she embraces the man (829) after finally recognizing him as her brother. Now she too has lost all interest in the unnecessary letter, but it is there in plain sight, lying on the ground, an eloquent reminder to the audience of what the dramatic mode of artistic creation has made possible and how inert and inconsequential a written narrative can be in the presence of face-to-face human interaction.

¹ For this “proleptic μέλλω,” see de Jong (2001: 53–54).

² Interestingly, Demetrius (*On Style* 216) praises the *enargeia* (Chapter 2, p. 35) of the historian Ctesias for his (now lost) narrative account of the report of Cyrus’ death to his mother, in which the crucial detail is postponed to create suspense and involvement on the part of the reader.

³ Theatrical space has been the object of extensive study and theorization; see Wiles (1997) and Rehm (2002) for discussions of Attic drama and Wiles (2003) for a recent survey with up-to-date bibliography. I am concerned here solely with the contrast between the drama, of which space is an inescapable feature, and narrative, to which space is irrelevant.

⁴ 694–96, 700–702; see Mastronarde (1979: 38–39) for parallels in later tragedy.

⁵ The chorus say (694–95), “Awe prevents me from looking upon you or speaking with you face-to-face.” Wilamowitz (1914: 160) and Hall (1996: 157–58, on lines 694–702) suggest that the chorus have prostrated themselves, but it is unimaginable that the chorus sang the ionic lines 694–96 and 700–702 from this posture and it is difficult to see at what point before their next utterance (787) they can have stood up without distracting our attention from the dialogue between the queen and the ghost.

⁶ James Barrett (2002: 132–67) devotes a chapter to a discussion of the indebtedness of the servant’s narrative in *Electra* to

Odysseus' fictitious narratives in the *Odyssey*. Barrett analyzes the metatheatrical character of Sophocles' staging, but ignores the theatrical.

⁷ For a discussion of some of the ancient visual representations of this scene, see Taplin (2007: 117–23).

⁸ Note “written into” and “script.” It is interesting that the tendency to think of plays as “texts” has become so fully ingrained that even as acute a student (and practitioner) of dramatic technique as Rehm cannot help thinking in these terms and can occasionally lapse into talking about “space” in connection with offstage events narrated in a messenger speech (204–5, 256–57), as though it is indistinguishable from the dramatic space.

⁹ See line 72 for the altar. One of the vases that Taplin (2007: 151) illustrates shows Orestes, downcast, sitting on the altar, with Pylades and Iphigenia on either side of him.

¹⁰ For discussion and excellent illustration, see Taplin (2007: 152–53).

¹¹ Terence Cave's *Recognitions* (1988) opens with a chapter entitled “Odysseus' Scar,” but a comparison between the recognitions in the *Odyssey* and the much more developed ones in later fiction, from Heliodorus to the twentieth century, that Cave examines shows that the influence of the drama is paramount.

¹² Dingel's treatment of this item of stage property (1967: 75–76, 125) is superficial and wholly inadequate. The urn in Sophocles' *Electra*, which Electra so movingly addresses when she thinks it contains her brother's ashes, is similarly cast aside when she recognizes the living Orestes. But its function as a prop has not ended, as it must later be carried into the palace (1323–25) to aid in Orestes' deception of Clytaemestra, who, we are told (1400–1), was arranging funeral rites for the urn when she was murdered (Chaston 2010: 145, 168). I do not know what warrant Finglass has for his confident statement that the vessel tended to by Clytaemestra is “not *the* urn, which was never taken inside” (2007: 512, on line 1401, with original emphasis).

Part II

The Second Stage: The Invention of Rhetoric

Paradigm Shift Happens

The standard view of the development of Attic tragedy during the fifth century is that it became progressively “rhetorical,” culminating in the works of Euripides, which are thoroughly imbued with the influence of various sophists and rhetorical theorists whose ideas became known in Athens during his lifetime.¹ This view, which has its roots in antiquity, has never been seriously challenged and is, therefore, generally accepted as true.² But what is unchallenged is not therefore true. I propose to call this view into question and replace it with what I consider a more plausible account, based on what we have learned from the preceding chapters. But first it will be appropriate to show in what ways the standard account is unsatisfactory.

Tradition made Euripides out to be superlatively “rhetorical” and even to have studied rhetoric with the sophist Prodicus.³ But elements of this tradition are later, in some cases much later, than the fifth century BC. For one thing, the term “rhetoric” is not attested before the fourth century and may have been coined by Plato in his *Gorgias*, which is to be dated to the 380s BC (Schiappa 1990, 1999: 14–16). Neil O’Sullivan (1993) and Gerard Pendrick (1998) have presented arguments that call into question Schiappa’s assignment of the creation of the term to Plato, an assignment that is based at least in part on an *argumentum ex silentio*. I have shown, however, that there is positive evidence that, whoever is responsible for the term, it was of recent coinage at the time of the *Gorgias* (Sansone 1993: 194–96). Since then, Thomas Hubbard (2007: 504 n. 2) has pointed to the occurrences of the verb ῥέω, “to flow,” at Aristophanes’ *Knights* 526 and 527 as undermining Schiappa’s case. For, as Hubbard notes, the use of this verb in reference to the power of speech is “something Schiappa, *Beginnings* [1999], p. 17, says we should have seen attested in Aristophanes if he really knew ‘rhetoric’ as a key term for public speaking.” But this is wholly irrelevant, as the verb ῥέω and the Greek word for rhetoric come from entirely different roots (Beekes 2010, vol. 1: 393 and vol. 2: 1281). Even if they came, or were thought to have come, from the same root, *Knights* 526 and 527 would merely show

that Aristophanes was aware that words from the root on which “rhetoric” is based refer to the power of speech, which no one would be interested in denying.⁴ Of course, the fact that the word “rhetoric” did not exist in the fifth century does not prove that rhetoric itself had not yet been born; later critics are entitled to use the vocabulary of the day to describe phenomena that existed earlier but had not yet developed an appropriate technical terminology. In any event, it is unlikely in the extreme that Euripides had “studied rhetoric,” whether with Prodicus or with anyone else. Prodicus’ dates are not securely known, but he is almost certain to have been younger than Euripides, who began producing tragedies in Athens in 455 BC.⁵ The same is true of Socrates, born around 470, with whom also Euripides is said to have studied. Nor is there any evidence that Prodicus taught anything that could be described as “rhetoric.” The most we can say is that he seems to have been preoccupied with the precise definition of words and was concerned especially to distinguish among near synonyms (Classen 1976: 230–38). Protagoras, it is true, along with his contemporaries Anaxagoras and Archelaus, was also said to have taught Euripides, and he indeed was somewhat older than the Attic dramatist, but he is unlikely to have been present in Athens before Euripides’ career had already begun.

In fact, there is surprisingly little evidence for the teaching of what would later be called “rhetoric,” in Athens or anywhere else, before about the 420s BC. Thucydides’ expressed admiration for Themistocles’ natural talent, which owed nothing to instruction (1.138.3), can be interpreted either as the historian’s acknowledgment that such instruction was unavailable in the lifetime of Themistocles, which ended in the middle of the fifth century, or as praise for the statesman who had no need of schooling. As it happens, the most substantial and least ambiguous testimony is to be found in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, produced in 423 BC. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain which portions of the text that has come down to us belong to the script written for the original production and which were added at the (unknown) date of the revision that Aristophanes is said to have prepared himself.⁶ Still, the portrait of Socrates that the play presents, as the proprietor of a school who is greedy for the payments that he hopes to extract from his pupils, is so pervasive that it is reasonable to attribute it to the original conception of *Clouds* and, hence, to the first production in 423. The very plot, therefore, of Aristophanes’ comedy presupposes the existence of instruction for which pupils were expected to pay.⁷ And one of the subjects that the fictional Socrates is equipped to teach is the art of persuasion, which is, on any definition of the term, within the realm of rhetoric. Early in the play (112–18) Strepsiades tells his son, whom he is sending to Socrates’ school for

instruction, that Socrates maintains a brace of rival Modes of Discourse, The Better and The Worse. The Worse is allegedly capable, by using unfair means, of overpowering The Better, and Strepsiades wishes his son to take lessons from The Worse, so that he can persuade his creditors that their lawsuits have no chance of success. Later, in an extended scene (889–1112), the two Modes of Discourse are brought out on stage and they engage in a debate in which The Better admits to having been bested, that is to say worsted, by The Worse (1102). Throughout the scene, the tactics of the triumphant Mode of Discourse are characterized as modern, novel, and newfangled (896, 937, 943, 1032).

Clearly, then, members of the Athenian audience in 423 BC were familiar with teachers who charged for their services and they would not be surprised to find instruction in the art of persuasion as one of those services. We have seen (Chapter 1, p. 4), however, that as recently as 425 BC the hero of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* thought of going to Euripides, rather than to a professional rhetorician, when he wanted to learn the art of speaking persuasively. It would seem, then, that instruction in what we would now call "rhetoric" may have been quite a recent addition to the curriculum. Aristophanes' *Clouds* suggests that the subject was topical, and a passage in Euripides' *Hecuba* points in the same direction. This play was likely produced in 425 or 424 BC, only a year or two before *Clouds* (Mastronarde 2002: 5). In the course of the play, Hecuba finds herself at a loss. She is trying to convince Agamemnon to punish Polymestor for having treacherously murdered her son Polydorus. When it appears that her attempt at persuasion is falling short, Hecuba breaks off her speech and engages in the rhetorical figures for which the technical terms are *apostrophe* and *interrogatio* (Hutchinson 2010; Lausberg 1998: §§ 762, 767):

O luckless me! Why is it that we mortals take pains to study all other branches of knowledge as we ought, yet we take no further pains, by paying a fee, to learn thoroughly the art of persuasive speaking, sole ruler where mortals are concerned, so that we might be able to persuade people of whatever we wish and gain our ends? (813–19, in Kovacs' 1995 translation)

It would be unreasonable to use Hecuba's words as evidence that the practice of payment for instruction in the art of persuasion was as yet unknown in 425 BC. Friedrich Solmsen, therefore, who discusses this passage in the context of other "utopian wishes" expressed by Euripidean characters, attempts to retain the element of impossibility in Hecuba's words by hesitantly suggesting that the emphasis might fall on "thoroughly" (ἐς τέλος, 817): "rhetoric has not yet been studied

sufficiently to the point of guaranteeing success” (Solmsen 1975: 70 n. 6). But this seems to confer undue weight on a word that is in no other way marked for emphasis, and scholars generally recognize that Euripides is here deploying his characteristic irony.⁸ Justina Gregory (1999: 141) notes that this is “an anachronistic reference to the instruction in rhetoric and other subjects offered by the sophists,” and she goes on to instance Prodicus as a practitioner. But, as we have seen, there is no evidence that Prodicus taught anything other than, as Plato puts it (*Cratylus* 384b), “the correct usage of words,” and this is precisely *not* an instance of anachronism, since it expressly maintains the temporal distinction between Euripides’ time, when lessons in rhetoric were apparently offered for a fee, and the time of the Trojan War, when they were not.

Members of Euripides’ audience would have been especially aware that instruction in the art of persuasion was absent from the world described by Homer if they knew that it was quite a new development, that is, if someone in recent memory had made a point of promoting skill in teaching rhetoric as a novelty.⁹ We have already seen that Aristophanes’ *Clouds* seems to indicate that pay for instruction in rhetoric was a matter of current interest in the 420s. There is one other piece of evidence, seemingly contemporary with *Hecuba* and *Clouds*, attesting to the topicality of the issue. Ian Storey (2003: 67) tentatively dates Eupolis’ *Goats*, which survives only in the form of a handful of brief fragments, to 424 BC. Storey shows (69–71) that the plot of Eupolis’ comedy was similar to that of *Clouds*: A rustic character attempts to become educated by taking lessons from a teacher of *grammatike* and *mousike* and, using language nearly identical to that in which Strepsiades asks Socrates to teach him The Worse Mode of Discourse (*Clouds* 244–46), a character offers to “pay whatever fee is necessary” (frag. 11 Kassel–Austin). Now, instruction in rhetoric or the art of persuasion is not mentioned in the surviving fragments of *Goats*. But the similarity of Eupolis’ plot to that of *Clouds*, in which a rustic is willing to pay a substantial amount precisely in order to learn to be persuasive, combined with *Hecuba*’s desperate wish that such instruction could be had for a fee, provides persuasive evidence that Athenians in the latter half of the 420s BC were attentive to the topic of hiring instructors to teach persuasive speech.

The value of the evidence that has just been presented is that it relies entirely on contemporary sources, and those sources suggest that something had recently happened that made a notable impression on the citizens of Athens. Another contemporary source, combined with some later evidence, presents the most likely answer to the question of what that something was (Enos 1992). According to Thucydides (3.86.3), in the summer of 427 BC, the citizens of the

Sicilian city of Leontini and their allies sent an embassy to Athens requesting the Athenians' intervention and military assistance in the face of a Syracusan blockade. The embassy was successful, and the Athenians sent a fleet to Sicily. Thucydides does not identify the members of the Leontine delegation, but we learn from the dialogue *Hippias Maior* (282b), attributed to Plato, that

Gorgias of Leontini, the well-known sophist, came here [i.e., to Athens] on public business as ambassador from his home-town – because he was best qualified in Leontini to handle community affairs. In the assembly, he won his case, and in private, by giving displays and tutorials to young people, he made a lot of money and took it out of the city.¹⁰

These words, from near the start of the dialogue, are put into the mouth of Socrates, who has just welcomed Hippias of Elis to Athens and has asked why his visits are not more frequent. Hippias replies that he is often called upon to serve as an ambassador by the citizens of Elis, so he is constantly busy not only with his own activities but with public affairs as well. This leads to Socrates' question, why it is that wise men of the past refrained from engaging in public affairs, whereas wise men of today, like Hippias himself, prove adept at negotiating both public and personal business. Hippias replies with characteristic self-assurance that advances in the intellectual sphere have made the moderns more skilled than their predecessors. Socrates, going along with Hippias' meliorist view of things, agrees that Gorgias (above) and, later, Prodicus were much more clever than the men of an earlier day, who "were so simple that they didn't realize the great value of money." The priority of Gorgias in Socrates' account is striking, particularly since he throws in as an afterthought, "And Protagoras did the same even earlier" (282d). The implication seems to be that, while Protagoras may have charged a fee for his instruction previously, Gorgias was the first to do so *in Athens*, that is, that what we have in the Platonic dialogue is an account, not surprisingly, from the Athenian perspective. Diodorus of Sicily, the first-century historian, who is here reliant on the earlier Sicilian historian Timaeus, further elaborates, saying that on this occasion Gorgias "thrilled the Athenians with his unconventional oratory."¹¹ The effect of Gorgias' speech is described using language (ἐξέπληξε) similar to that used by Gorgias himself when he refers to striking visual impressions that arouse strong emotions (*Helen* 16; see Chapter 3, p. 53) and to specious verbal accusations that paralyze their object (*Palamedes* 4). Interestingly, the Leontine embassy of which Gorgias was a member occurred during the same summer as the Athenian debate concerning the fate of the rebellious Mytileneans, which was the occasion, as we have seen, of Cleon's criticism of his fellow Athenians for being

captivated by linguistic novelty and for allowing themselves to be undone by the pleasure of witnessing sophistic displays (Thucydides 3.38.5–7; see Chapter 2, p. 29).

Diodorus also attributes to Gorgias the invention of rhetorical skill (τέχνας ῥητορικὰς πρῶτος ἐξεύρε, 12.53.2), a claim that critics regularly dismiss as a tendentious and patriotic tribute to a fellow Sicilian on the part of Diodorus and his source Timaeus. But Corax and Tisias, the supposed pioneers of formal rhetoric and from whom Gorgias is alleged to have learned, were themselves Syracusans, so Sicilian pride cannot have been the sole motivation. Rather, it seems, Timaeus is assigning priority to Gorgias from the perspective of the Athenians, whom he introduced to rhetoric in 427 BC (Goebel 1983: 140–43). This is confirmed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who also seems to have found Timaeus’ statement difficult to accept (*Lysias* 3.5, translation from Usher 1974: 25–27):

According to Timaeus, it was Gorgias who first made artificial and metaphorical expression catch the imagination of Athenian orators, when he came as an ambassador to the city and astounded the Assembly with his rhetoric. The truth is, however, that this style had a continuous following even in earlier time. Thucydides, for instance ...

That is, Dionysius seeks to show that the style of oratory allegedly introduced by Gorgias was already known at Athens before 427 BC. He did not, however, have any evidence, in the form of “artificial and metaphorical” Attic prose from before that date – presumably because none existed – so he refers instead to Thucydides, work on whose history could only have been in its earliest stages at the time of Gorgias’ visit, since the war it documents did not begin until 431 BC.

Taking together all the evidence we have surveyed, we may be confident that Gorgias’ appearance in Athens in 427 represents a major cultural event, and that the citizens of Athens were exposed to something they had not witnessed before: Not only was Gorgias’ manner of speaking dazzling and memorable, but he was willing to give instruction in that manner of speaking, for a fee. Others, like Protagoras, may have charged a fee for their teaching and still others – although Dionysius cannot supply a credible name¹² – may have cultivated an artificial and metaphorical style, but Gorgias created a stir in 427 by offering for the first time to teach the verbal arts to the Athenians. Interestingly, Aristophanes’ *Banqueters*, which was composed in 427 BC shortly *before* the embassy of which Gorgias was a member, includes a scene in which a dissolute young man with a fascination for the latest developments in verbal sophistication is presented as assimilating those developments not from teachers but

from imitating the practice of public speakers (frag. 205 Kassel–Austin). The magnitude of the impression made by Gorgias’ visit is reflected in the sudden fascination with the practice of paying for instruction in rhetoric, attested in the immediately following years by *Goats*, *Clouds*, and *Hecuba*. Twenty years later, when the Thirty Tyrants came to power in Athens, two of their number, Critias and Charicles, enacted a ban on the teaching of “the art of speaking” (λόγων τέχνην μὴ διδάσκειν, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.31).

When we turn to the development of fifth-century tragedy in Athens, however, it is difficult for us to see why Gorgias’ visit made such a spectacular impression. For the tragedians, especially Euripides, are acknowledged to have employed “rhetorical” modes of expression well before 427 BC. To put things in perspective, by that time Aeschylus had been dead for nearly 30 years, Sophocles was in his sixties, and Euripides was in his forties or fifties, having already produced such tragedies as *Alcestis* and *Medea*. These plays, which are securely dated to 438 and 431 BC, respectively, have been singled out by modern critics for their rhetorical sophistication, sometimes even in a context that includes an explicit acknowledgment of the fact that they predate Gorgias’ momentous appearance in Athens.¹³ And many studies have been devoted to the tabulation of the “rhetorical” elements to be found in the surviving works of Attic tragedy, approximately half of which were written before Gorgias set his Sicilian foot on Attic soil.¹⁴ Indeed, a far better case can be made for the influence of Attic tragedy on Gorgias than vice versa.

A recognition of this can be found already in the fourth century, in the works of Aristotle. In his *Rhetoric* (1404a26–36) Aristotle refers to Gorgias as the exemplar, and perhaps as the pioneer, of the use of “poetic” style in prose. Aristotle’s attitude toward this type of style is clear from the fact that he goes on to say that uneducated people for the most part think that it is especially attractive. According to Aristotle, however, it is not attractive, and the reason he gives for his denial shows that he is thinking primarily of tragedy when he speaks of “poetic” style. For, he says, even the tragedians no longer use the arcane diction that characterized the earliest form of the dramatic genre; just as they abandoned tetrameters in favor of the more “conversational” iambic trimeter (cf. *Poetics* 1449a22–28), so their verbal style has evolved in the direction of greater comprehensibility. That being the case, Aristotle says, it is ridiculous to imitate a style that even its foremost practitioners have outgrown. It is characteristic of Aristotle to respect the integrity of literary forms and to think of them as developing organically, through a process of natural growth, without external interference. Gorgias earns Aristotle’s condemnation for violating the proper boundaries between prose and verse. So

Gorgias is held up as an example of those who exhibit the vice of “frigidity” in the choice of vocabulary when Aristotle quotes his “poetic” expression, “lyricomendicant toadies and bearers of false witness against a sworn witness” (*Rhetoric* 1405b37 = frag. 15 Diels–Kranz). Aristotle also condemns as “excessively poetic” Gorgias’ “frigid” abuse of metaphor in the phrases “you have reaped an evil harvest, for you have sown a shameful crop” and “hale and hearty are the deeds.”¹⁵ Gorgias does, however, win Aristotle’s approval for his “tragic” address to a passing swallow who relieved herself directly above him (*Rhetoric* 1406b15–19 = test. 23 Diels–Kranz): “How unseemly, Philomela!” Philomela was a legendary Athenian princess whose transformation into a bird was treated in Sophocles’ lost tragedy *Tereus*. But Aristotle is not referring to a published prose work of Gorgias; rather it is an anecdote about him, drawn either from oral tradition or from the comic stage.¹⁶ And presently Aristotle explains why Gorgias’ tragic outburst is acceptable in this instance: It is appropriate to use poetic style when one is angry or otherwise emotionally aroused or, as here, when one is speaking ironically (μετ’ εἰρωνείας, *Rhetoric* 1408b20). Elsewhere as well, Aristotle quotes with apparent approval another ironic statement of Gorgias (εἰρωνευόμενος, *Politics* 1275b27 = test. 19 Diels–Kranz).

Aristotle, then, who was born around the time of Gorgias’ death, provides evidence of Gorgias’ familiarity with tragic style, and we have seen (in Chapter 5, p. 91) that Gorgias is explicitly credited with theoretical observations on the nature of tragedy. The surviving works of Gorgias himself display close connections with Attic drama, but unfortunately there is no reliable means of dating them, so there is no agreement among scholars regarding the direction of influence. His *Encomium of Helen* explores themes and situations treated also in Euripides’ *Trojan Women* of 415 BC and *Helen* of 412, but there seems no way of ascertaining the relative dating of the two authors’ works.¹⁷ Likewise, Euripides’ lost tragedy *Palamedes*, also produced in 415 BC, must have contained a trial scene in which the title character defended himself with a speech along the same lines as Gorgias’ *Defense of Palamedes*, but the date of the latter is impossible to determine.¹⁸ Be that as it may, we know that Aeschylus and Sophocles also composed tragedies entitled *Palamedes* and, while we do not know the date of the latter’s play, the former’s necessarily predated its author’s death in 456 BC. What is more, the few surviving fragments of Aeschylus’ play include two quotations from a speech in which Palamedes recounted the cultural and intellectual innovations for which he was responsible, presumably as a means of defending himself before his fellow warriors against charges of treasonous activity (Sommerstein 2000: 121–25). Although the text of one of the

fragments is corrupt, it is certain that in it Palamedes claimed responsibility for having “organized commanders of brigades” (ταξίαρχας ... ἔταξα, frag. 182 Radt) and made other innovations in military regulation. Gorgias’ Palamedes makes a similar claim in his own defense speech, saying that he “invented military organization” (τάξεις ... πολεμικὰς εὐρών, *Palamedes* 30). In the other quotation from Aeschylus’ play (frag. 181 Radt), Palamedes boasts that he “set in order the previously chaotic life of all Greece and of Greece’s allies.” He did this, first of all, by “discovering the scientific study of number, most outstanding of intellectual endeavors.” Gorgias’ Palamedes, who also claims credit for having invented mathematics, goes even farther than Aeschylus’ hero, saying that he was a benefactor to “the Greeks and to all mankind, not only those of today but of those to come” and that he “empowered the previously impotent life of mankind, making it orderly when formerly it was disorderly” (*Palamedes* 30).

Regardless, therefore, of the relationship between Euripides’ and Gorgias’ treatments of the Palamedes story, there can be no doubt of the connection between that of Gorgias and that of Aeschylus. Nor can there be any doubt as to the direction of influence, as Aeschylus was some 30 or 40 years older than his Sicilian admirer. It is generally acknowledged that the birth of Aeschylus is to be placed near the year 525 BC, while Gorgias’ long life appears to have stretched from the 470s to the 370s BC (Ioli 2010: 14–15). By the time Gorgias was born, Aeschylus had already won his first victory at the Dionysia and had assisted his countrymen in defeating the Persians at Marathon and Salamis (Sommerstein 2008, vol. 1: ix–xi). It is reasonable to assume that everything that Gorgias wrote was composed after Aeschylus had reached his maturity and much of it following Aeschylus’ death in 456 BC. What survives of the written work of Gorgias is modest in length – fewer than 30 pages in the Diels–Kranz collection of fragments – but still provides ample evidence of Aeschylean influence even beyond what we have seen in the case of *Palamedes*. We in fact have explicit evidence of Gorgias’ familiarity with at least one of Aeschylus’ tragedies. Fragment 24 Diels–Kranz consists of Plutarch’s quotation from Gorgias, to the effect that “one of Aeschylus’ dramas, the *Seven against Thebes*, is a play packed with Ares.” Now, the very same observation is attributed to Aeschylus himself in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (1021), and some scholars have suggested that Gorgias is here indebted to the comic playwright. But, as Rudolf Pfeiffer (1968: 46; cf. 281) notes, it is “much more plausible that the Aristophanic Aeschylus used a famous phrase favourable to himself than that Gorgias quoted Aristophanes verbatim.”

One of the most famous lines of the *Seven against Thebes*, a tragedy produced in 467 BC, seems to have made an impression on Gorgias. In

the course of describing the various leaders poised to attack Thebes, the messenger tells Eteocles that Amphiaraus, unlike the other warriors, bears no device on his shield, “for he wishes to have, not the appearance of supreme valor, but the reality” (οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ’ εἶναι θέλει, 592). This line is frequently quoted by later writers, from Plutarch to Tzetzes, and is referred to prominently by Plato at *Republic* 361b and 362a. In keeping with his conviction that so neat a disjunction between appearance and reality is not justified,¹⁹ Gorgias slyly and subtly undermines the Aeschylean formulation, not once but on two different occasions. In section 3 of his *Encomium of Helen*, a section to which we will return presently, Gorgias begins his praise of Helen by noting the distinguished status of her parents: Her father was said to be a mortal, Tyndareus, but her actual father was a god, Zeus, who “had the appearance [of fatherhood] because of the reality” (διὰ τὸ εἶναι ἔδοξεν). In the *Defense of Palamedes*, Gorgias again seems to be implicitly correcting the famous saying of his tragic predecessor. Near the conclusion of his speech Palamedes flatters his jury, which consists of leaders of the Greek army, addressing them as “you who are in reality supreme among the Greeks and appear to be such” (ὕμῖν τοῖς πρώτοις οὔσι τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ δοκοῦσιν, 33).

There is another example of a connection between Gorgias and Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes*, which is both clearer and more problematic. Gorgias is quoted (frag. 5a Diels–Kranz) as referring to vultures as “animate sepulchres,” ἔμψυχοι τάφοι, a striking expression²⁰ that conveys in more focused form the metaphor found in lines 1020–21 of Aeschylus’ play. There the herald proclaims the decree that the dead Polyneices, as an enemy of the city, will be cast out of Thebes without funeral rites, to receive condign punishment by being ignominiously interred by the birds of the sky (πετηνῶν τόνδ’ ὑπ’ οἰωνῶν δοκεῖ / ταφέντ’ ἀτίμως τοῦπιτίμιον λαβεῖν). The problem is that, while the connection between these two passages seems assured, the quoted lines are almost certainly not by Aeschylus, as they come from the ending of the play, which is nearly universally agreed to have been added for a production subsequent to the original performance.²¹ When that production took place, and whether the ending would have been recognized by its audience as deriving from someone other than Aeschylus, cannot be determined with certainty. Many scholars believe that Aeschylus’ play was restaged in Athens in the late fifth century, and it may have been this production, according to Alan Sommerstein (2010: 68), that “greatly impressed the rhetorician Gorgias” and prompted his description of the play as “packed with Ares.” Attempts have been made to narrow the date of this supposed revival to between 411 and 405 BC (Donadi 1977–1978; Lech 2008), but we have no evidence that Gorgias was in Athens at

that time. Nor can we be sure that the ending that contains lines 1020–21 featured in the supposed fifth-century revival. Further, doubts have been raised even about the existence of revivals of Aeschylean dramas in fifth-century Athens (Biles 2006–2007) and some linguistic and stylistic elements in the final scene of the play as transmitted suggest that it is a product of the fourth century, prompting Gregory Hutchinson (1985: xlii–xliii, 209–11) to conclude that the scene belongs to a production later than 386 BC.

It is, therefore, by no means certain that we can use this fragment of Gorgias' output as evidence of Aeschylean influence, although we have seen that there is good reason to believe that Gorgias was familiar with at least some version of Aeschylus' Ares-packed play. It may, I suppose, be remotely possible that a reference to avian undertakers appeared in the genuinely Aeschylean portion of the play that the later ending was designed to replace, and that the reviser, who was, like Gorgias, an admirer of the original playwright, retained the conceit (which may already have attained notoriety through Gorgias' reuse of it) in its new setting. There is, however, another element of fragment 5a that we have not mentioned, and it too suggests Aeschylean influence on Gorgias. Here is Donald Russell's translation of part of the context in which the fragment appears, sections 3.1–2 of *On the Sublime*, attributed to Longinus (Russell and Winterbottom 1972: 464):

Now if untimely turgidity is unpardonable in tragedy, a genre which is naturally magniloquent and tolerant of bombast, it will scarcely be appropriate in writing which has to do with real life. Hence the ridicule attaching to Gorgias of Leontini's "Xerxes, the Persians' Zeus" and "their living tombs, the vultures."

The vocabulary the author uses ("turgidity," "magniloquent," and "bombast") to introduce the two Gorgianic expressions is explicitly associated with tragedy,²² and is reminiscent of the criticism to which Euripides subjects Aeschylus' style in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (see especially 939–40, with Taillardat 1965: 451–53, 467–70; and Podlecki 2006). We have seen that one of these expressions has an Aeschylean connection. The other also derives from Aeschylus. While Aeschylus does not call Xerxes "the Persians' Zeus," characters in his *Persians* do refer to Darius, the father and predecessor of Xerxes, as a *daimon* (620, 642) and as "the Persians' god" (Περσῶν ... θεόν, 643). And when the chorus greet Darius' widow, the mother of Xerxes, they refer to her as "consort of the Persians' god (θεοῦ ... Περσῶν) and mother of a god" (157). Andrew Gow (1928: 134–36) has shown that the fifth-century Persians did not in fact regard their kings as divine. That is, the Aeschylean locutions are metaphorical and are therefore

likely to be original with him, as they are consistent with his dramatic aims in this play (Garvie 2009: 98–99; Muntz 2011). They are, indeed, striking expressions, and the addition of the qualifier (“the Persians”) on two separate occasions makes them all the more noteworthy, especially since the speakers are in each instance themselves Persian. As was the case with his use of Aeschylus’ conceit of burial in the bowels of birds, Gorgias has taken his model one step further, by referring to Xerxes not merely as a god but as Zeus, the god who stands in the same relationship to the other Greek gods as Xerxes does to the other Persians.

Unfortunately, we do not have, as we do in the case of Aeschylus’ *Persians*, the context in which Gorgias referred to Xerxes as “the Persians’ Zeus.” In his commentary on the treatise of “Longinus” in which this expression and the conceit about vultures are quoted, Donald Russell (1964: 69) claims that “both these quotations come from Gorgias’ *Epitaphios*, his speech for the Athenian war-dead delivered in 427.” But there is no evidence connecting the quotation about Xerxes with the *Epitaphios*, nor is there evidence for the date of that speech. As we have seen, Gorgias was in Athens in 427 BC as an emissary from his native city of Leontini, but it is inconceivable that, as a noncitizen, he was given the honor of delivering so solemn an oration in this or any year (Loraux 1986: 8–9). It is extremely doubtful that even the resident alien Lysias, to whom one of the surviving Athenian funeral orations is attributed, would have been invited to address the Athenians in the context of eulogizing those killed in war at the annual memorial event (Todd 2007: 163). Tellingly, when Philostratus describes Gorgias’ delivery of his *Epitaphios*,²³ his language closely echoes that of Thucydides when he introduces Pericles’ funeral oration, even saying that Gorgias’ speech was delivered over those who had died in the *wars* (plural: ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων); while that phrase is appropriate to Thucydides’ explanation of the Athenians’ habitual practice (2.34.5), it makes no sense in connection with a single speech, which would have commemorated those who had died in a single war in a given year. Surely the speech in which Gorgias made reference to avian undertakers – in any event rather a tasteless comment to make while delivering an actual funeral oration – and the speech attributed to Lysias were rhetorical exercises designed to show off the orator’s skills and to entice potential pupils by holding out the promise that they, too, could learn the art of speaking in so impressive a fashion. We do in fact have a 200-word quotation (frag. 6 Diels–Kranz), to which we will return presently, that undoubtedly comes from Gorgias’ display-piece purporting to honor the Athenian war-dead, but we have no reason to believe that he mentioned “the Persians’ Zeus” in that speech. The only reason for

supposing that the quotation comes from the *Epitaphios* is that the author of *On the Sublime* gives this quotation together with the characterization of vultures, which another source quotes as having come from that speech. Gorgias does seem to have mentioned the Persians in his *Epitaphios* (frag. 5b Diels-Kranz), and it could well have been in this context that he compared Xerxes to Zeus, but we should recognize that this is at best merely a surmise and not, as Russell's confident statement suggests, established fact.

But, to return to Aeschylus' *Persians*, the suggested inspiration for Gorgias' comparison of Xerxes: There is another likely connection between that play and the work of the Sicilian orator. In the final sentence of the *Defense of Palamedes* the defendant flatters the members of the jury by calling them "the foremost Greeks of the foremost Greeks" (τοὺς πρώτους τῶν πρώτων Ἑλλήνας Ἑλλήνων, 37). Similar, but more striking, is Gorgias' formulation in the *Encomium of Helen*, where he uses the neuter plural in referring to Helen as "the foremost of the foremost men and women" (τὰ πρώτα τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, 3). In commenting on the latter passage Otto Immisch (1927: 11) identifies the use of the neuter as Ionic and tragic, citing Herodotus 6.100.3 and 9.78.1 and Euripides, *Medea* 916–17. There is a difference, however, that Immisch does not acknowledge (Gygli-Wyss 1966: 33 n. 1): In the two Herodotean passages the neuter plural is used of a single person – Aeschines is identified as the "foremost of the Eretrians" and Lampon as the "foremost of the Aeginetans" – whereas in *Medea* Jason is addressing his sons, telling them that he expects them to become, along with their newly acquired step-brothers, "foremost in the land of Corinth." Immisch also refers to a line (421) in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, which is neither Ionic nor tragic, in which the contemporary politician Archdemus is said to be "foremost in wickedness," using the same neuter plural expression. Immisch claims that this line is paratragic, but I can see no reason for believing that it is. Rather, we are dealing with a phenomenon that is rare enough that we are in no position to identify it as characteristic of a particular genre or dialect. It is, then, striking that Gorgias uses the neuter plural to refer to Helen as "foremost." Also striking is the use of the expression "foremost of the foremost," a locution that Henry Broadhead (1960: 173) identifies as "peculiar to tragedy, the idea conveyed by the first adj[ective] being strengthened by the addition of the same adj[ective] in the gen[itive] case." The context in which Broadhead makes this statement is in his commentary on line 681 of Aeschylus' *Persians*, where the ghost of Darius addresses the Persian elders who constitute the chorus of the play as "trustworthy of the trustworthy" (ὦ πιστὰ πιστῶν), using the neuter plural of the adjective. Broadhead is mistaken, however, in regarding this locution as peculiar

to tragedy – Schäfer (1974: 396–97) cites a handful of examples from elsewhere – but the Aeschylean example is the earliest in surviving Greek literature and, indeed, Schäfer considers Aeschylus to have been the originator of this type of expression and to have set a “fashion” for using it. Schäfer cites Gorgias’ use of the expression, but he is not entirely convinced that Gorgias is following fashion, since “foremost” is a superlative and is therefore not strictly parallel to “trustworthy of the trustworthy” (401). Be that as it may, these two passages, *Helen* 3 and *Persians* 681, are the only two places known to me where this locution is found in which a neuter adjective is used to refer to a person or persons. Each represents a collocation of two relatively rare phenomena, the combination of the two being found, apparently, only here. What is more, the Aeschylean passage comes at a particularly memorable place in the action of the play: The quoted words are the very first words spoken by the ghost of Darius, whose appearance represents one of the most impressive *coups de théâtre* in all of Greek drama.

We have seen, therefore, that Aeschylus’ *Persians* is the likely inspiration for two of Gorgias’ bold expressions, the characterization of Xerxes as “the Persians’ Zeus” and the reference to Helen as “foremost of the foremost,” the latter expression repeated by Gorgias in a different form in referring to Palamedes’ jury of Greek warriors. Aeschylus’ play was famous and a number of fifth-century authors refer to it in one way or another, so it is not surprising that Gorgias should be familiar with it. Herodotus’ acquaintance with the *Persians* is assured by a number of resemblances both thematic and verbal (Saïd 2002: 137–45). Eupolis’ comedy *Marikas*, most likely produced in 421 BC (Storey 2003: 197–98), parodied line 65 of the play (frag. 207 Kassel–Austin). Likewise, the comic poet Plato made reference to *Persians* 1040 in a play whose name and date we do not know (frag. 226 K–A). And Aristophanes’ *Frogs* contains a reference to the very scene in which the ghost of Darius appears. Shortly after mentioning his *Seven against Thebes*, which, as we have seen, he proudly calls “a play packed with Ares” (1021), Aeschylus claims that his *Persians* taught the Athenians always to desire victory over their adversaries (1026–27). At the mention of the *Persians*, Dionysus immediately exclaims, saying how much he enjoyed the Darius-scene.²⁴ Aeschylus’ play was first produced in 472 BC, Aristophanes’ *Frogs* in 405. Neither Aristophanes himself nor anyone in his audience, apart perhaps from a handful of hypergeriatric Athenians, had witnessed the original performance of *Persians*. How, then, did they, along with Herodotus, Eupolis and Gorgias, acquire their familiarity with Aeschylus’ tragedy? The way in which Dionysus describes his reaction to the Darius-scene suggests that he is referring to a performance in the theater, since he

says that he enjoyed it when the chorus during that scene “clapped their hands together like this and said *iaoui*” (1029). There is no reference in the text of the play as it survives today to the chorus clapping their hands together, so Dionysus is presumably replicating what he saw and heard on stage.²⁵ On the other hand, earlier in *Frogs* Dionysus had been presented as an avid *reader* of plays, saying that a passionate longing for Euripides came over him when he was engrossed in perusing the text of that poet’s *Andromeda* while doing military service (52–54; see Chapter 1, p. 11). Accordingly, Nick Lowe (1993) argues that Aristophanes’ acquaintance with Aeschylus derives from performances in the theater while his acquaintance with Euripides comes from written texts. In the end, we cannot say with any confidence whether a given reference to a passage in a play of Aeschylus results from a reading of the text or from attendance at a performance, whether of the original production under the direction of the poet himself or of a subsequent production in Athens or elsewhere.

In the case of Gorgias, the matter is complicated by the fact that we do not know when, if at all apart from 427 BC, he was present in Athens and could have witnessed performances in the Theater of Dionysus. Interestingly, the scholia to line 1028 of *Frogs* quote the polymath Eratosthenes, head of the library at Alexandria in the third century BC, as saying that Aeschylus staged a revival of his *Persians* in Syracuse at the invitation of the tyrant Hiero (test. 56a Radt). This evidence has recently been called into question by Zachary Biles (2006–2007: 234–36), who argues that Eratosthenes was merely speculating and trying to account for the apparent discrepancy between the (already corrupt) text of *Frogs*, according to which Dionysus enjoyed “hearing *about* Darius’ death,” and the surviving version of Aeschylus’ play, in which the audience sees and hears the dead Darius. But the corruption that creates the discrepancy is so blatant – the line is manifestly unmetrical as it stands – that it is impossible to imagine that Eratosthenes, who was the author of a work in at least 12 books entitled *On Old Comedy* (Pfeiffer 1968: 159–62), would have used it as the basis for constructing a speculative hypothesis. I am, therefore, inclined to agree with Alexander Garvie’s conclusion (2009: liii), that “there is no good reason to distrust” the evidence for a Sicilian production of *Persians*. This production will have taken place sometime between the original staging of the play in Athens in 472 and the death of Hiero in 467 BC.²⁶ There is other, reliable evidence for Aeschylus having visited Sicily on more than one occasion, producing tragedies there and even dying there, in 456 or 455, and being buried in the Sicilian city of Gela.²⁷ For us, the significance of this is that Gorgias was a citizen of Leontini, some 40

kilometers from, and at this time under the control of, Syracuse and its tyrant Heiro, whose court has been characterized by David Asheri (1992: 153) as “pre-eminently a salon of literary men.” Gorgias spent his formative years in an environment in which the newly created genre of tragedy was first being experienced in the Greek cities of Sicily, in the form of performances of dramas by Aeschylus.²⁸ Since these productions were underwritten by the extravagant tyrant Hiero, they must have been lavish and impressive spectacles and one of them, *Women of Aetna*, was even set, at least partly, in Gorgias’ hometown of Leontini (Poli-Palladini 2001: 318–19, 292–93). We cannot, of course, be confident that Gorgias was in the audience for any Sicilian production of a play of Aeschylus, but it is reasonable to propose that his acquaintance with Aeschylean drama, which we have not yet finished documenting, was prompted by that poet’s presence and popularity in Gorgias’ native Sicily. After all, we have seen that Gorgias was familiar with Aeschylus’ *Persians*, and we have good reason to believe that that play was performed in Sicily at some time during Gorgias’ youth.

We have seen, as well, that Gorgias is credited with a characterization of Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* as a “a play packed with Ares,” so it is clear that he also knew that play. There is more. In section 13 of the *Encomium of Helen* Gorgias is concerned to assert the potency of persuasion to sway the mind of the hearer, by saying that it is capable of making the incredible and the invisible apparent “to the eyes of the imagination” (τοῖς τῆς δόξης ὁμμασιν). To begin with, *omma* is a largely poetic word for “eye,” the usual word in prose being *ophthalmos*. Apart from the Hippocratic corpus, where it is fairly frequent, the word occurs three times in Gorgias (who does not use *ophthalmos*), twice in Herodotus, once in Thucydides²⁹ and never in the genuine works of the Attic orators. Both Mario Untersteiner (1961: 104) and Guido Paduano (2004: 96) compare Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 854, the latter saying that the metaphor is “not uncommon in Greek culture.” The image of “the mind’s eye” is indeed well represented in ancient Greek (and later) literature. Theodor Gomperz (1910: 134 and 155) provides a good collection of examples, but he is mistaken in regarding its appearance in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Art* as the first. The author of that essay says, in section 11.2, “That which escapes the vision of the eyes is mastered by the vision of the mind (τῇ τῆς γνώμης ὁψει).” This text cannot be dated with any more precision than to perhaps the last quarter of the fifth century BC (Jouanna 1988: 190–91) and, since we do not know the date of Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen*, we cannot say whether the *Encomium*, which Gomperz ignores, or the Hippocratic treatise is earlier. We can, however, be quite certain that Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers*, produced in

458 BC, is earlier than either. In that play, Aegisthus has been deceived by the chorus into believing that a stranger has come to the palace with news of the death of Orestes. As the audience knows, the “stranger” is none other than Orestes himself, who has returned to take vengeance on Aegisthus and Clytaemestra. Aegisthus tells the chorus that he wishes to examine the stranger himself, to determine whether his information is trustworthy, pompously proclaiming, “Let me tell you, he won’t be able to trick a mind whose eyes are wide open (οὔτοιφρέν’ ἄν κλέψειεν ὠμματαμένην).” With this, Aegisthus walks into the place. Fifteen lines later, we hear his agonized screams as he is murdered by Orestes.

Like Aeschylus’ “trustworthy of the trustworthy,” this line of *Libation Bearers* (854) comes at a strikingly dramatic moment. But, while “trustworthy of the trustworthy” were the first words uttered by the ghost of Darius, emerging from his subterranean abode among the dead, this is the exit line that concludes “by far the shortest appearance in Aeschylus for a character of standing” (Taplin 1977: 346).³⁰ The line will have been memorable, especially in performance, both because of its dramatic nature and because of the reference to the eyes of the *phrenes*, a conceit which may have been making its first appearance here. Of particular interest is the fact that Aegisthus is utterly confident that his mind’s eye will see through to the truth, whereas we know, and events will presently reveal, that he has been fatally deceived. And this is precisely what Gorgias is concerned to convey in his use of the conceit at *Helen* 13: that persuasion is capable of molding someone’s mind in whatever way the persuader wishes, replacing one conception with another and presenting to the eyes of the imagination what would otherwise not be perceived or believed. This is in contrast to the overwhelming majority of the other occurrences of this conceit, including its use by the Hippocratic author of *On the Art*, in which it is precisely the superiority of the mind’s eye that is stressed, namely, the ability of the mind’s eye to see through and beyond what the corporeal eye is capable of perceiving. For this reason, I think it likely that Gorgias is influenced specifically by Aeschylus’ formulation.

There is another consideration that may be seen to support this suggestion. Immediately upon Aegisthus’ departure from the stage the chorus begin to pray to Zeus. They introduce their prayer, in the line following Aegisthus’ exit line, by saying (855), “Zeus, Zeus, what am I to say? Where am I to begin (πόθεν ἄρξωμαι)?” Gorgias adopts this device, in his *Defense of Palamedes*, when he has the accused say to his jurors (4), “Where am I to begin (πόθεν ἄρξωμαι) speaking of these matters? What am I to say first?” To be sure, this device was to become a rhetorical commonplace among both the Greeks and the

Romans (Fedeli 1980: 421–22), but this exact wording occurs only in Aeschylus and Gorgias and in two other works, the late fourth-century *Funeral Oration* of Hypereides (6.6) and the speech, attributed to Andocides, *Against Alcibiades* (4.10). This latter is generally regarded as spurious and as dating from the fourth century. But even if it can be dated to the year 415 BC (so Gazzano 1999: xxviii–lvi), and even if it is a genuine work of Andocides from that year (so Furley 1989), it is in effect a political pamphlet that would have held little interest for the non-Athenian Gorgias. In any event, we assume that Gorgias was familiar with this scene of *Libation Bearers* through his adoption of the conceit of the mind's eye from the previous line of the play. Indeed, the two resemblances, that between *Libation Bearers* 854 and *Helen* 13 and that between *Libation Bearers* 855 and *Palamedes* 4, support one another and show that the Sicilian Gorgias knew and was echoing the Athenian dramatist's work. How he knew that work, whether in written form or through performance in the theater, we cannot know.

We do know, however, that *Libation Bearers* was the second play of a trilogy, the first play of which was *Agamemnon*. Gorgias appears to refer to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* near the start of his *Encomium of Helen* (2), when he says that it is incumbent upon him to refute those who malign Helen, "a woman about whom there is unanimity of comment and sentiment both in the conviction of those who listen to poets and in the sound of her name, which stands as a reminder of the tribulations." This last is a reference to the supposed connection between the name "Helen" and the root of the Greek verb ἐλεῖν, "to wreck." We find this etymological connection already in fifth-century tragedy, twice in the plays of Euripides. In his *Hecuba*, the title character curses the Spartan woman who provoked the Trojan War, saying (442–43), "With her lovely eyes she most foully wrecked (εἰλε) flourishing Troy." And in *Trojan Women*, it is Hecuba again who speaks (891–92), warning Menelaus not to look upon the captured Helen, "lest she overwhelm (ἐλη) you with desire, for she overwhelms men's eyes and thoroughly overwhelms their cities." But "the locus classicus for the etymological link between Helen and destruction via the stem ἐλ-" (Gregory 1999: 96) is the opening of the second stasimon of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. There, the chorus of Argive elders ask – and leave unanswered – the question of who it was who so entirely fittingly gave the name Helen to the daughter of Tyndareus, "wrecker of ships, wrecker of men, wrecker of cities (ἐλέναυς ἑλανδροῦς ἐλέπτολις, 689–90)." It is impossible to say whether this "etymology" is original with Aeschylus, but this is the earliest evidence we have for it and this passage is surely the most elaborate and most memorable expression of it. Otto Skutsch (1987) has ingeniously and speculatively connected Helen, both etymologically and in popular belief, with the

phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire, regularly associated by the ancient Greeks with Helen's brothers, the Dioscuri. Skutsch quotes third-century and later authors who attest to a belief that one form of St. Elmo's fire, which portended disaster, was associated with Helen and he discounts the possibility of an Aeschylean origin for the notion that her name is related to the verb of destruction. Skutsch asks (193), "Would a passage in Shakespeare have caused a superstitious belief in English sailors?" But the wrecking of *ships* is a relatively minor aspect of Helen's character, in myth in general and in particular in Aeschylus' play, which is insistently focused on the destruction of Argive soldiers at Troy, of Troy itself, of the Trojan royal family – of which Cassandra is a piteous representative – and, ultimately, of Agamemnon. Nor is it sailors' popular beliefs with which we are here concerned; rather the question is what experience on the part of his audience does Gorgias aim to tap into by referring to "the sound of Helen's name, which stands as a reminder of the tribulations." In a context in which he has just mentioned "those who listen to poets" a literary association is more likely to be the case than an acknowledgment of popular superstition. And the literary reference par excellence in this connection is the impressive lyric passage in *Agamemnon*, which undoubtedly served as the inspiration for Euripides as well.³¹

There is at least one other passage in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* to which Gorgias appears to make reference in his *Encomium of Helen*. In praising the "godlike beauty" of Helen, Gorgias says that "she attracted, with a single body, many bodies of men (ἐνὶ δὲ σώματι πολλὰ σώματα συνήγαγεν ἀνδρῶν, 4)." The reference here is to the large number of suitors who, legend has it, vied for the opportunity to marry Helen, but Gorgias immediately (5) declines to name the successful suitor and the reason for his success, since what is so well known carries conviction but not delectation. It is with good reason that Gorgias skirts this issue in his celebration of Helen, for his wording teases his learned audience with an allusion to *Agamemnon* 1456–57, where the chorus use this same juxtaposition of "single" and "many" to highlight the baneful nature of Helen, saying that a single woman caused the destruction of the lives of many men.³² Eduard Fraenkel cites a number of parallels to this juxtaposition, calling it "one of the quasi-rhetorical effects, many of them pre-rhetorical, sought in elevated style" (1950, vol. 3: 689–90; cf. Fehling 1969: 283). None of those parallels, however, is as pertinent as this one from Gorgias, which Fraenkel does not mention; this one, like the passage from *Agamemnon* and unlike the others cited, is specifically concerned with Helen (Reich 1907–1909, part 2: 49; Paduano 2004: 91). Gorgias is in fact so fond of this juxtaposition that he uses it twice more in the course of his *Encomium*. In section 18 he refers to painters who, "from

many colors and shapes create a single shape and figure (ἐκ πολλῶν χρωμάτων καὶ σωμάτων ἐν σῶμα καὶ σχῆμα τελείως ἀπεργάζονται),” thereby delighting the eye. And in section 13, implicitly associating his own ability to persuade with the appeal of lovely works of visual art and with the sexual attractiveness of Helen, he speaks of verbal contests “in which a single speech delights and sways a numerous crowd because written with skill (ἐν οἷς εἷς λόγος πολὺν ὄχλον ἔτερψε καὶ ἔπεισε τέχνη γραφεῖς).”

Finally, there is one more expression in the surviving works of Gorgias that alludes to Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, although the exact wording of both passages is less than certain. In the *Defense of Palamedes*, the accused addresses his accuser, saying (22), “It is worth (ἄξιον) examining the kind of man you are who says the kind of things you do, like the worthless attacking the worthless (ἀνάξιος ἀναξίῳ).” This is George Kennedy’s translation (in Sprague 1972: 59) of the text of Diels–Kranz.³³ But this translation is almost meaningless, since attacks by the worthless on the worthless are irrelevant to the examination of the relative qualities of Odysseus and Palamedes, who has no wish to represent himself as worthless. Rather, the two occurrences of ἀνάξιος must have slightly different meanings, for which we have been prepared by the use, earlier in the sentence, of ἄξιον in yet another sense, and ὥς must mean “how” rather than “like.” Thus, Mario Untersteiner (1961: 125) translates, “quanto spregevole tu contro chi non lo merita,” that is, it is worth examining “how unworthily you attack someone who does not deserve it,” which is precisely what Palamedes examines in the following sections of the speech. This finds a close parallel at *Agamemnon* 1527, where Clytaemestra, justifying her murder of her husband, claims that he died ἄξια δράσας, ἄξια πάσχω, which on the surface appears to mean “having performed worthy actions and suffering worthy punishment.” But clearly Clytaemestra has no wish to attribute “worthy” actions to her victim.³⁴ Rather, she means “suffering worthy punishment for actions that are worthy of punishment.” In his commentary on this line Eduard Fraenkel says (1950, vol. 3: 724), “Here as often elsewhere certain stylistic devices of exalted poetry served as prototypes for what became favourite patterns in the ‘Kunstprosa’ of Gorgias, etc.” But he does not refer to *Palamedes* 22, nor, as far as I am aware, does anyone else mention it in connection with *Agamemnon* 1527, although the one is surely the model for the other.

We had occasion in Chapter 5 (pp. 91–93) to discuss Gorgias’ provocative statement regarding the type of deception that the tragic genre contrives, “in which the person who effected the deception is more honorable than the person who did not” (frag. 23). There is a tantalizing one-line fragment quoted from an unnamed play of

Aeschylus that seems directly related to this statement. The anonymous author of the *Dissoi Logoi*, a sophistic treatise that most likely dates from the early fourth century,³⁵ in order to justify the view that deception is not always reprehensible, quotes a line of Aeschylus (frag. 301 Radt): ἀπάτης δικάϊας οὐκ ἀποστατεῖ θεός, “a god is not averse from honorable deception.” Despite the first-foot anapaest followed by diaeresis, which is uncommon in Aeschylus (Griffith 1977: 77), this is nearly universally accepted as a genuine Aeschylean line. The possibility of an “honorable deception” would seem to suggest a connection with the fragment of Gorgias, although scholars have been reluctant to make the connection. For the most part, commentators on the Aeschylean fragment do not refer to Gorgias, nor do those scholars who discuss Gorgias’ statement regarding tragedy refer to this line of Aeschylus in that context. Mario Untersteiner cites Aeschylus fragment 301 when discussing Gorgias’ epistemology and his concept of *kairos*, but not specifically in connection with his aesthetics (1954: 112; similarly Dosi 1968: 47). I am convinced, however, that we should see a connection between this line of Aeschylus and Gorgias’ understanding of the nature of tragedy. Wilhelm Nestle (1942: 319) does, indeed, acknowledge that it is very likely that Gorgias was conversant with the Aeschylean line, but he does not seem to recognize the exceptional character of Aeschylus’ expression. In fact, these two passages are two of only three appearances in ancient Greek literature, as far as I am aware, of “honorable” (δίκαιος) as applied to “deception” (ἀπάτη). The third appearance is instructive, as it occurs in Plutarch’s *Life of Agesilaus*, when the Spartan king is said to have repaid the perfidy of Tissaphernes with an “honorable deception” (9.3). The problematic character of deception is a leitmotif in the *Life of Agesilaus* (Shipley 1997: 38–41; see Chapter 5, p. 102 n. 34), and it will be remembered that Plutarch is our lone source for Gorgias’ statement regarding tragedy. We know, therefore, that Plutarch was familiar with Gorgias’ formulation, quoting it in two separate essays (Chapter 5, p. 91), and his use of it here stands out as his singular response to a tempting opportunity for a display of his erudition. It is not, therefore, a commonplace that Plutarch is repeating, but a learned allusion to Gorgias (or to Gorgias’ Aeschylean source).

Otherwise, Aeschylus and Gorgias are alone in referring to “honorable deception.” We do not, unfortunately, know in what context this Aeschylean line occurred, or who the speaker was, whether human or divine. Martin West (1979: 133–34) suggests that the line was spoken by the title-character of *Prometheus Pyrphoros*; as West points out, the first-foot anapaest conforms to the practice of the author of *Prometheus Bound*, who is likely to be identical with the

author of the *Pyrrhophoros*. Whoever uttered the line on the fifth-century stage, he was in reality an Athenian citizen impersonating some divinity or legendary human. The notion that there could be such a thing as “honorable deception,” and that it could receive the approval of, and even be engaged in by, a god must have seemed shocking. But a thoughtful member of the audience, reflecting on the fact that he was himself at this moment being subjected to a form of deception that not only was honorable but also formed part of a ritual approved by Dionysus, is likely to have been struck by the relevance of this line to his own situation. It would be rash to imagine that this line inspired Gorgias’ insight into the nature of tragedy. But given the number of affinities that we have seen between the work of Gorgias and that of the pioneering figure in Attic tragedy, it is not unreasonable to see a connection, however difficult it is to document the nature of that connection.

Finally, there are some verbal similarities between *Prometheus Bound* and the works of Gorgias that are worth mentioning here. I am convinced that this play was not composed by Aeschylus, but the unanimity of the ancient evidence in ascribing the trilogy of which this play is part to Aeschylus indicates that it was known as his work in antiquity. Martin West, who is likewise convinced of the inauthenticity of the play, has attractively suggested that the trilogy was the work of Aeschylus’ son, the tragic poet Euphorion, who produced it in his father’s name in perhaps the 430s BC (1990b: 68–72). This would account for the universal attribution of it to Aeschylus, even, apparently, as early as the later fifth century BC (Flintoff 1983). One of the striking features of the *Prometheus Bound* and, apparently, of the entire trilogy is the portrayal of the god Zeus as a tyrant (Saïd 1985: 15–20). “Tyrant” is not a word that the Greeks ordinarily applied to the ruler of the gods, except in “contexts relating ... to the possible overthrow of Zeus.”³⁶ Such is the case throughout *Prometheus Bound*, but that is not the context of Aristophanes, *Clouds* 564, where the chorus of clouds invite “Zeus, tyrant of the gods,” to join in their dance. It is, however, interesting to note that, earlier in the play, Socrates had instructed Strepsiades that now Dinos rules the gods in place of Zeus (381). Apart from this, the only occurrence I am able to find of an apparent reference to Zeus as tyrant where there is no hint of the god’s overthrow is in a magical papyrus from the fourth century after Christ.³⁷ For this reason it is rather surprising that Gorgias, in praising Helen’s two fathers, Tyndareus and Zeus, refers to them respectively as “of men the most puissant and of all the tyrant” (*Encomium of Helen* 3). I can account for this only on the assumption that Gorgias is reflecting the *Prometheus Bound*, where the words “tyrant” and “tyranny” are applied to Zeus over a dozen times. Other

places where Gorgias displays familiarity with this play include *Helen* 17, where Gorgias says that vision “inscribes images in the mind of that which has been seen” (ἐνέγραψεν ἐν τῷ φρονήματι), recalling Prometheus’ injunction to Io to “inscribe in the record-book of the mind” his directions to her (ἐγγράφου σὺ μνήμοσιν δέλτοις φρενῶν, *Prometheus* 789). The *Defense of Palamedes* also exhibits an acquaintance with *Prometheus Bound*, perhaps not surprisingly, since both works involve a similar situation, in which a sympathetic culture-hero and benefactor of humankind has to defend himself verbally against accusations of wrongdoing. Prometheus justifies his actions to the chorus in a speech that begins with a “rhetorical” question, “Who other than me effected the distribution of powers to the new gods?” (439–40). But then he breaks off, saying that there is no need for him to recount this to the chorus, who already know these things (εἰδυίαισιν ... ὑμῖν, 441–42). Instead, he will describe the benefits that he conferred on mortals, which include “number” (459) and “the disposition of letters, the Muse-engendering instrument, remembrance of all things” (460–61), ending with an echo of his opening question, saying, “No one other than me contrived sailing vessels” (467–68). All of this is recalled in Gorgias’ *Defense*, when Palamedes addresses his jurors, begging their indulgence and claiming that it is unfortunately necessary for one who is wrongly accused to recount things that the jurors already know (εἰδῶσιν ὑμῖν, 28). He describes the benefits that he conferred, not only on the Greeks who are judging him but on all humankind, benefits that include “number” and “letters, the instrument of remembrance” (30). Palamedes introduces his enumeration of benefactions with the rhetorical question “Who would have changed man’s life from resourcelessness to resourceful?”³⁸

Given the uncertainty over the authorship of *Prometheus Bound*, and given our ignorance of the date of the *Defense of Palamedes*, we cannot even assert with confidence that the tragedy was earlier than the speech. And even if Gorgias is indeed the borrower, we cannot know whether he considered the play to be Aeschylean. I would not, therefore, press the evidence presented by *Prometheus Bound* very hard. The author of that play, however, if he was not himself Aeschylus, at least reproduced the style of Aeschylus so convincingly as to deceive scores of generations of readers. If in fact the *Defense of Palamedes* is later than *Prometheus Bound*, it is clear that it has been influenced by it, and the least we can say is that we see here further evidence of Gorgias’ fascination with Attic tragedy, especially tragedy of the sort composed by Aeschylus. If, on the other hand, *Prometheus* postdates the *Defense*, it is interesting to note that so avid an admirer of Aeschylus has allowed himself to be influenced by a writer of prose who is also, as we have seen, rife with Aeschylean echoes. In any

event, considering the fact that we have today a body of Gorgias' work that consists of fewer than 4,000 words, and considering that less than one tenth of Aeschylus' total output survives for us to compare, we can be confident that the influence exercised by Aeschylus on Gorgias was even greater than we have been able to document. We should not be surprised by this. On the contrary, what is surprising is that there has been such a reluctance to acknowledge the extent of the debt. Part of the reason for this reluctance, surely, is the prejudice against Gorgias as a writer and as a thinker, a prejudice that has its origins in the works of Plato, who portrays the sophist, in the dialogue *Gorgias* and elsewhere, as a superficial purveyor of a verbal technique that lacks any intellectual substance. This prejudice is most memorably expressed in John Dewar Denniston's dismissive characterization of Gorgias (1952: 12): "Starting with the initial advantage of having nothing in particular to say, he was able to concentrate all his energies upon saying it." Denniston's Oxford colleague Eduard Fraenkel seems to have shared this prejudice; as we have seen (in this chapter, pp. 139–40), on two occasions Fraenkel forbears from citing Gorgianic parallels even when those parallels were clearly pertinent.³⁹

Whatever we think of Gorgias' merits, it has been a matter of common knowledge since the time of Aristotle that his approach to the creation of a distinctive prose style involved the wholesale adoption of features characteristic of verse. In the introduction to the third book of his *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle describes the development of prose style, he says that the poets were the first to cultivate style (*lexis*), which was later adopted by the writers of prose, "for example Gorgias," and thus did a "poetic" style of prose arise (1404a25–26). Aristotle is here concerned with matters of diction, word choice, and metaphor, and he gives occasional examples from Gorgias to illustrate this poetic style (1405b37, 1406b9–11 and 15–19). In addition, the ancients considered Gorgias the first to exploit in prose such features as antithesis, rhyme, and balanced clauses containing equal numbers of syllables, features that are amply demonstrated in his surviving works.⁴⁰ While these are not necessarily or exclusively poetic, they give to Gorgias' prose a rhythm and a predictability that arouse in the members of the audience a feeling familiar to them from poetic recitations and from the spoken portions of the drama. These features have come to be known as the "Gorgianic figures" and have been thoroughly studied; Edward Schiappa (1999: 85–113) gives a recent account. Much earlier, Karl Reich (1907–1909) had provided a lengthy inventory of stylistic features found in Gorgias and in earlier poetry, drawing his examples from epic, lyric, elegiac, and dramatic poetry alike, for the purpose of documenting the poetic origins of these stylistic features. The difference between what Reich, Schiappa,

and others who study Gorgias' style have done and what has been presented in this chapter is that we have concentrated on specific verbal parallels that show, not merely a general debt to the way poets express themselves, but also a direct and, in one instance ("a play packed with Ares"), acknowledged indebtedness to a particular poet. It is not, I believe, accidental that this poet was a dramatist, indeed, was the father of the drama, which is what Aeschylus became in virtue of his having sired the second actor.

We saw in Part I that the revolutionary character of the drama has been obscured by the concerted efforts of Plato and Aristotle, and the seeming collusion of virtually everyone since their time, to treat the drama as nothing more than another literary form. This is not how the drama would have struck Gorgias and his Sicilian contemporaries when the tragedies of Aeschylus were first produced in the Greek cities of the west. They would have seen for the first time figures from the legendary past confronting one another on the stage, constructing arguments that an opposing figure would be expected to counter. We have spoken of the effect that this would have had on spectators as a kind of "counterpoint," whereby the audience member would hear one figure speaking and see a second figure processing what the first was saying, at the same time as the audience member himself was processing the words and, perhaps, anticipating the second figure's response to them. It is my belief that it was precisely in this context that we can see the origin of rhetorical theory. Aristotle, too, puts the origin of rhetoric in Sicily in the fifth century BC, ascribing it to the mysterious, if not wholly fictional, figures of Corax and Tisias. Characteristically, Aristotle identifies a specific time and a single historical cause for the invention of rhetoric: Following the overthrow of the Sicilian tyrants, that is, after 467 BC, the need for experts in litigation for the recovery of private property generated the first systematic attempts at a theoretical treatment of argumentation.⁴¹ This "explanation" obviously explains nothing. Aristotle was of course aware that litigation and public argument existed well before that date. But the conviction that formal rhetoric arose precisely in the fifth century BC cries out for an explanation of why it arose then and not at some other time. The fond belief that Aristotle may have had access to reliable information that is lost to us has allowed his explanation to be repeated and accepted. In the absence of reliable information, it is impossible to disprove Aristotle's account. But I should like to propose a more plausible explanation for the development of rhetorical theory in the fifth century BC, an explanation based upon the characteristics of the new genre of tragedy that were explored in Part I, and based upon the reliable information laid out in this chapter, namely, that some, at least, of the works of

Aeschylus were known in western Greece even before the overthrow of the Sicilian tyrants and that one, at least, of the inhabitants of Sicily was influenced by the work of Aeschylus and was prompted to engage in theoretical reflection regarding the nature of tragedy. He was also one of the most prominent figures in the early history of rhetoric. That is not to say that Gorgias was himself the originator of rhetoric. He may well have been. But the evidence available to us does not allow of a definitive, or even a probable, answer. What will be explored in the following chapters are representative features of rhetorical speech whose origins individually can best be explained as being due to the techniques that dramatic composition introduced.

¹ Lees (1892), Schmid and Stählin (1929–1948, vol. 3: 751–53), M. Lloyd (1992: 19–36), and Scodel (1997).

² Note, however, the comments of Mastronarde, who recognizes that changes in the style of tragic rhesis in the course of the fifth century are parallel to, but are “not necessarily in any way dependent on,” advances in skill of argumentation manifested in courts and Assembly (2010: 209; cf. 19); also Bers (1994: 179) and Hall (1995: 40).

³ For the evidence, in Greek and in English translation, see Kovacs (1994: 1–2, 26–27).

⁴ Words from that root, including ῥήτωρ, “public speaker,” occur some 15 times in Aristophanes’ two earliest plays: *Acharnians* 38, 416, 444, 447, 680, and 686; and *Knights* 60, 216, 325, 358, 425, 653, 687, 880, and 1350.

⁵ Most scholars agree on putting the date of Prodicus’ birth between 470 and 460 BC: Guthrie (1969: 274) and Flashar (1998: 58).

⁶ For a recent discussion of the revision of *Clouds*, see Revermann (2006b: 326–32).

⁷ Whether the Socrates on whom Aristophanes’ character is based charged fees or even considered his activities to be a form of instruction is, of course, another matter. The existing evidence for payment for instruction is fully and conveniently collected by Blank (1985: 25–49), with the corrections and refinements of Tell (2009).

⁸ See, for example, Jouan (1984: 4), Kovacs (1987: 81), Scodel (1997: 494), and Mastronarde (2010: 231–32).

⁹ The anachronisms studied by Easterling (1985) involve references in tragedy to institutions, like the invention of writing or the practice of democratic voting, that were at least a generation or two old.

¹⁰ The translation is that of Woodruff (1982: 2). Platonic authorship of *Hippias Maior* has been challenged, but Woodruff argues forcefully for authenticity (93–105), dating the dialogue to approximately 390 BC. Using entirely different criteria, Ledger (1989: 156) also comes to the conclusion that *Hippias Maior* is authentic, dating it (218) to the 390s BC.

¹¹ Diodorus 12.53.3. The attribution to Timaeus is assured by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Lysias* 3.5), who refers explicitly to Timaeus (see below) and uses language similar to that of Diodorus: πρεσβέων κατεπλήξατο τοὺς ἀκούοντας τῇ δημηγορίᾳ; see Pearson (1987: 125–26).

¹² Finley (1939: 39) suggests that Dionysius considered the speeches that Thucydides puts into Pericles' mouth to be genuine works of that statesman, whose death occurred before the time of Gorgias' visit, but if that is the case one wonders why he ascribes them to Thucydides rather than to Pericles.

¹³ See, for example, Reich (1907–1909, part 1: 19–20), Finley (1939: 43 n. 1), Denniston (1952: 10), Solmsen (1975: 24), and Mastronarde (2010: 209). The ancient scholiast to line 1 of *Alcestis* notes, “Apollo speaks the prologue rhetorically (ῥητορικῶς),” for which see Meijering (1987: 196–97).

¹⁴ Lechner (1874), Miller (1887), Lees (1892), Navarre (1900: 72–111), Finley (1938), Duchemin (1968), Collard (1975b), Buxton (1982), Goebel (1983, 1989a), Jouan (1984), M. Lloyd (1992: 19–36), Bers (1994), Clausen (1997), Scodel (1997, 1999–2000), Conacher (1998: 50–69), Dubischar (2001, 2006), and Pelling (2005).

¹⁵ *Rhetoric* 1406b9–11 = frag. 16 Diels–Kranz. Solmsen (1979: 71) combines this latter with a quotation in Demetrius, *On Style* 116 (“pale and faint-hearted is the screed”), to complete the

appropriately Gorgianic antithesis.

¹⁶ Blass (1887: 52), “aus mündlicher Ueberlieferung.” Compare the similar defilement of Socrates by a gecko from a rooftop in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (169–74). A comic source for the anecdote involving Gorgias was suggested by Rosenmeyer (1955: 225).

¹⁷ For recent discussions of the problem, see Scodel (1980: 93–100), MacDowell (1982: 12), M. Lloyd (1992: 100–102), Croally (1994: 221–27), Wardy (1996: 50), Usher (1999: 4–5), Spatharas (2002), and Wright (2005: 272–78).

¹⁸ For Euripides’ play, see Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004: 92–103); for the relationship with Gorgias’ *Palamedes*, see Scodel (1980: 90–93).

¹⁹ See in particular frag. 26 Diels–Kranz: “Reality (τὸ εἶναι) is indiscernible unless appearance is involved, and appearance (τὸ δοκεῖν) is insubstantial unless reality is involved.”

²⁰ Lucian amusingly puts this phrase into the mouth of the departed spirit of a disappointed legacy hunter, whose superannuated target persisted in living on, an animate sepulcher, after he himself died an untimely death (*Dialogues of the Dead* 16.2).

²¹ Martin West (2000: 351–52) suggests that the ending may be the work of the author of *Prometheus Bound*, whom West considers to have been Aeschylus’ son Euphorion.

²² Hermogenes, *On Ideas* (Rabe 1913: 249) also quotes Gorgias as referring to vultures as living tombs, and goes on to say that tragedy provides many instances of this sort of expression (Buchheim 1989: 70–71; Castelli 2000: 23–25).

²³ *Lives of the Sophists* 1.9.5 = test. 1.5 Diels–Kranz. It is interesting to note that Philostratus introduces his discussion of Gorgias (1.9.1) by saying that Gorgias was the father of the sophistic art just as Aeschylus was of the tragic.

²⁴ Unfortunately, the line containing Dionysus’ reaction involves “perhaps the most difficult textual crux in *Frogs*” (Sommerstein 1996: 246), but the words “the dead Darius” seem not to be

corrupt, and the line clearly refers to Dionysus' appreciation of the scene in which the ghost of Darius appeared.

²⁵ Nor, as it happens, does the exclamation *iauoī* appear, although quite a profusion of other, similar ejaculations can be found in the text of *Persians* (Schauer 2002: 213–14). Similarly to what we see in *Frogs*, a character in an unidentified comedy of Aristophanes (frag. 696 K–A) says that, when he was watching (θεωρῶν) Aeschylus' now-lost tragedy *Phrygians*, “the chorus danced like this and like this,” undoubtedly mimicking the choreography of an actual performance.

²⁶ Taplin (2006: 6). As Libran Moreno (2005: 107–8) notes, we have evidence for Aeschylus' presence in Athens in 468 and 467, narrowing the dates to one of the years 471, 470, or 469, of which she prefers the last. It should be noted, however, that Aeschylus' presence at the *Dionysia* in Athens in 468 and 467 does not preclude a visit to Syracuse at some other time during those years.

²⁷ Test. 88–92 Radt, Herington (1967), Griffith (1978), Sommerstein (1995–1996), Wilson (2007: 354–57), Kowalzig (2008), and Csapo (2010: 96–97).

²⁸ The popularity of Aeschylus and of tragedy in general in Sicily is attested by a number of fifth-century Attic vases relating to tragedy that appear to have been imported into the island (Todisco 2002: 51–52).

²⁹ In a problematic passage in the speech of Archidamus (2.11.7). Mugler (1964: 271–73) omits mention of the medical writers in his otherwise full discussion of the word's history. The word seems to have begun to be used by writers of prose only near the very end of the fifth century BC.

³⁰ Further, this line follows a pair of lines that end in rhyming participles (παρών and μαθών). As is well known, Gorgias is especially given to employing rhyme himself, a device that he may have adopted from Aeschylus, who seems unusually fond of it (Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980, vol. 3: 250–51, on *Suppliants* 946–47).

³¹ I note, for what it is worth, that the immediately following words in *Helen* 2 (ἐγὼ δὲ βούλομαι λογισμένον), like the very opening

words of the speech (κόσμος πόλει μὲν εὖ-), fall into the iambic rhythm that, in Gorgias' day, would have been most closely associated with the spoken verse of Attic tragedy; cf. Blass (1887: 77 with n. 3) and Norden (1909, vol. 1: 64).

³² μία τὰς πολλὰς, τὰς πάνυ πολλὰς / ψυχὰς ὀλέσας'. See J.I. Porter (1993: 282). Clytaemestra repeats this rhetorical figure when she tells the chorus not to blame Helen as the woman who, singlehanded, destroyed many men (ὥς μία πολλῶν / ἀνδρῶν ψυχὰς Δαναῶν ὀλέσας', 1465–66).

³³ Accepting the widely adopted emendation by Blass (1881: 168), οἷά λέγεις ὥς, for the unintelligible οἷδὰς γε ἴσως of the manuscript.

³⁴ For which reason the surviving manuscripts preserve the corrupt and unmetrical text, ἀνάξια δράσας, “having performed unworthy actions.” For “suffering worthy punishment,” see, for example, Sophocles, *Electra* 298.

³⁵ For the date, see T.M. Robinson (1979: 34–41). Conley (1985), however, is skeptical, suggesting that the work might be a later school exercise, perhaps from as late as the Byzantine period. If so, one wonders where the author found the undoubtedly Classical four-line tragic quotation cited at 2.19 that is not known from any other source.

³⁶ Sommerstein (2001: 142; on Aristophanes, *Wealth* 124), citing *Birds* 1605, 1643; three passages from *Prometheus Bound*; “and possibly Cratinus fr. 171.22.” This last is from a comedy, *Plutoi*, in which Cratinus seems to have engaged in systematic parody of the Prometheus plays (Bakola 2010: 122–34), so that Sommerstein’s “possibly” is unnecessarily hesitant.

³⁷ PGM 5.471 (Preisendanz and Henrichs 1973: 196–97). The papyrus invokes “loud-thundering Zeus Zeus tyrant Adonai.” Dieterich (1891: 69) punctuates in such a way as to take “tyrant” with Zeus, but Preisendanz and Henrichs wonder if the epithet rather goes with Adonai.

³⁸ The potential expression here (ἄν ἐποίησε, 30) is odd, considering that the expected answer is presumably, “No one (other than me) *did* these things,” not “... *would have done* these

things.” Sauppe’s attractive emendation ἄλλος ἐποίησε, effectively “Who other than me changed ...?” (Baiter and Sauppe 1845–1850: 137), would make the resemblance to *Prometheus* 440 and 467 even closer.

³⁹ In his commentary on *Agamemnon* (1950, vol. 2: 473–74), Fraenkel does cite Gorgias to provide evidence, which survives as the result of a “special piece of good fortune,” of a transition formula that Fraenkel supposes was a common feature of “the practice of contemporary public speech.” That is, according to Fraenkel, the survival of some of the wholly derivative work of Gorgias is fortunate for the sole reason that it supplies evidence of the clichés that were current in his day.

⁴⁰ Radermacher (1951: 51) and Scodel (1997: 490). In addition, Gorgias’ tendency to avoid hiatus in his writing suggests another attempt at imitating verse (Schwinge 1997: 20), a tendency that may have increased through his career (Blass 1887: 79–80).

⁴¹ This assumes that Cicero (*Brutus* 46 = Aristotle frag. 137 Rose = Radermacher 1951: A.V.9) is accurately reporting what Aristotle said.

Perhaps You Will Object

In the previous chapter we reviewed a number of reasons for questioning the standard view, namely, that fifth-century tragedy became increasingly “rhetorical” as a result of the influence of “professional” rhetoricians, with Euripides being especially susceptible to that influence. While our demonstration of Gorgias’ pervasive indebtedness to Aeschylus is not necessarily incompatible with this view, it does at least suggest that the relationship between tragedy and rhetoric should not be thought of in terms of a direct dependency of the one upon the other. It should be noted in passing that if, as the standard account has it, rhetoric is a Sicilian invention, one would expect Aeschylus, with his extensive and well-documented Sicilian connections, to have been more, not less, subject to rhetoric’s spell than Euripides. In any event, if the standard view is to be upheld, Gorgias, for all his Sicilian provenance, needs to be written out of the picture, both because of the longstanding prejudice against him and because of the perception that his influence over the Attic tragedians ought not to be detectible before his celebrated appearance in Athens in 427 BC. As we have seen, “rhetorical” features of Euripidean tragedy are readily acknowledged to be in evidence before that date. The hopes, therefore, of those persisting in the standard view must be affixed to the nebulous figures of Corax and Tisias, whose credentials are held to be impeccable for the sole reason that we know nothing reliable about them. No examples of forensic or epideictic oratory are available to us that are demonstrably older than the earliest surviving tragedies of Euripides (M. Lloyd 1992: 19, 23, 30, 35–36). Any perceived rhetorical features of those plays, therefore, must be owed to the influence, direct or indirect, of the Sicilian inventors of the craft, who must be responsible for creating those features because, after all, Euripides is a dramatist and not a student of rhetoric.

There is a great deal of circularity and special pleading here, as is often the case when evidence is scarce or lacking. Michael Lloyd’s *The Agon in Euripides* (1992) is an admirable piece of work, and if I draw examples from it in what follows that is not meant as a criticism but

as an illustration of how pervasive the standard view is. For example, Lloyd discusses Euripides' use in his *agones* of "the hypothetical syllogism" (32–33):

In this type of argument, the speaker postulates a condition which would substantiate his opponent's position. He then points out that the condition was not fulfilled, so that his opponent's position collapses.

Lloyd notes, with reference to Bateman (1962), that this type of argument is frequent in Lysias, and he analyzes Euripidean examples from as early as *Medea*, produced in 431 BC.¹ Although he acknowledges that the Euripidean examples are some 30 years older than those in Lysias, and although he notes the close verbal similarities in the way in which Euripides and Lysias formulate their arguments, Lloyd does not consider the possibility that the orator may have been influenced by the most popular literary figure of his day. Instead, Lloyd uses the evidence from Lysias, who was born when Euripides was about 40 years old, to illustrate the "rhetorical" character of the *agon* in Euripides' tragedies, even though there seem to be no surviving examples of the type of argument that Lloyd describes earlier than those found in the plays of the tragedian.

In the absence of evidence, Lloyd is constrained to use an argument from likelihood, appealing to the (unspecified) close contacts between Athens and Sicily in support of the assertion that it is "very likely that rhetorical theory and teaching had reached Athens by the mid-450s at the latest" (22–23). As we saw in Chapter 7 (pp. 120–23), the available evidence suggests that the teaching of rhetoric in Athens was a novelty in the late 420s. The only evidence that Lloyd can invoke is "the evidence of Euripides' plays themselves, where repeated use of formulaic expressions in rhetorical contexts seems occasionally to indicate rhetorical influence" (20). We know, of course, what a "rhetorical context" is, because ... well, in fact, we do not know what a rhetorical context is. According to Lloyd (19 n. 1), "'Rhetoric' refers here, and in what follows, either to the systematic study of the art of speaking or to speeches containing features associated with such study." But, since we have no tangible evidence for what the systematic study of the art of speaking was like before the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle, we have to make do with speeches containing features that can be seen to be later associated with such study. While Lloyd's definition of rhetoric is difficult to apply in practice, and his arguments based on that definition involve manifest circularity, he does at least provide a definition of rhetoric. It may not have escaped the reader of this volume – it has certainly not escaped its author – that no definition of rhetoric has yet been provided, despite the

frequent recourse to the word and the concept.

It is time, therefore, for the term “rhetoric” to be defined. It would be inappropriate for me to use a definition of my own devising, as I would then be justifiably liable to the charge of using a circular argument or a persuasive definition. I will therefore content myself with repeating Aristotle’s own definition in his *Rhetoric*, as translated by Edward Cope (1867: 33): “the faculty of observing or discovering in every case presented the possible means of persuasion” (δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν, 1355b25–26). One thing that is striking about this definition, particularly in light of what was said in Chapter 2 about the consistent association, for the Greeks, of the drama with terminology drawn from the realm of vision, is Aristotle’s use of the verb θεωρῆσαι, translated, or rather paraphrased, by Cope as “observing or discovering.”² Now, this is a perfectly natural use of this word in a connection like this, and one can find countless instances in Plato and Aristotle of the use of this verb to mean “consider,” “contemplate,” and the like;³ the noun derived from it, θεωρία, is, after all, the origin of the English word “theory,” and it is only a slight overtranslation to render Aristotle’s definition as “the faculty of theorizing about the possible means of persuasion in every case presented.” For Aristotle, then, rhetoric is the capacity for visualizing – for seeing, as it were, “in the mind’s eye” – that which is likely to persuade. For this reason it was quite appropriate for Michael Lloyd to examine cases of hypothetical syllogisms in the *agones* of Euripides’ tragedies. Such arguments, which envision and preemptively invalidate one’s opponent’s likely means of persuasion, are a second-order rhetorical phenomenon. One must first be concerned to imagine the means best suited to one’s own prospects for persuasion before one can begin to anticipate the arguments that are likely to be used against one. And this is why the appearance of such hypothetical syllogisms in some of the earliest plays of Euripides is so interesting. They present valuable evidence of a fairly sophisticated practical and theoretical grasp of the rhetorical art already in the 430s BC.

No one, least of all Michael Lloyd, would dispute that. The question is, where did this rhetorical sophistication come from? I propose, using my own argument from likelihood, that the most plausible origin for such contemplation of argument and counterargument is in the theater or, rather, in the mind’s eye of the tragic poet. In Part I we saw, or rather theorized about, the radical innovation of the drama as it affected the perceptions of the spectators in the theater; a new set of cognitive skills, analogous to those needed to process polyphonic music, was now required of audiences that were confronted with newly configured stories already familiar from

narrative sources. The playwright himself, of course, was a member of the audience before he became a dramatist and he too must have had to develop a new set of skills, since his craft now required him to envision the means available for persuasion in order to supply them for the use of his characters. Of course that is something that Homer and other narrative poets had long had to do. Book Nine of the *Iliad*, for example is largely taken up with an extended attempt on the part of Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax to persuade Achilles to reenter the fight against the Trojans. But Homer knew that his audience's attention was focused solely on him, as he took on the characters, in turn, of the three ambassadors and then of Achilles, who responds to them. Aeschylus, on the other hand, knows that his audience's attention will be divided between Agamemnon and Clytaemestra, even as each of them speaks the lines that Aeschylus will compose for each of them to deliver.

It may be objected that, while all of this may sound plausible in theory, we really require some indication in the text of the tragedians to support the notion that the tragic playwright is peculiarly possessed of the faculty of observing or discovering in every case presented the possible means of persuasion. This is, of course, a tall order, particularly since the tragic poet never speaks in his own voice. If, however, we can find a tragic character who is possessed of this faculty, we may safely conclude a fortiori that the playwright who supplied the words for the character to speak was possessed of what Aristotle defines as the art of rhetoric. Not only is such a character available in what survives of fifth-century tragedy, he can be found in one of the earliest tragic texts now in existence. The date of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* is not known for certain, but it was demonstrably written before that playwright's death in 456 BC. Most scholars now believe that it is a product of the 460s, although arguments have been produced that it may in fact date from as early as the 470s BC.⁴ In any event, this play, which was written for production in Athens, as we know from the papyrus fragment that records its performance at the Dionysia (Garvie 1969 = 2006: 1–28), is almost certainly too early to reflect cultural developments that emerged in Sicily only after the overthrow of the Greek tyrants there. In the course of the play, Danaus and his 50 daughters, who have fled from Egypt, seek asylum in Argos. Granting asylum to these refugees is likely to involve the Argives in an armed conflict with the daughters' 50 cousins, who have pursued them from Egypt, so it will be necessary for Danaus and his daughters to persuade the king and the citizens of Argos to take them in. In preparation for the imminent confrontation with the Argive authorities, Danaus, who has clearly envisioned beforehand the possible means of persuasion in this particular case, gives his

daughters detailed instructions regarding not only what they ought to say but also how they ought to deliver their speech in order to be most persuasive (176–203). Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this speech of Danaus is that it has been almost entirely disregarded by students of early Greek rhetoric. Even Richard Buxton, whose *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* devotes more than 20 pages (1982: 67–90) to a discussion of the role of *peitho* in this play, says nothing more about this speech than “Success will depend on the persuasiveness of the Danaids’ demeanour and speech” (69–70).

It will be instructive, then, to examine the speech of Danaus in some detail. He begins by assuring his daughters that he is himself prudent and trustworthy (πιστῶ, 177), using a word from the same root as the word for persuasion, *peitho*, hinting thereby that they should be persuaded by his following words. He continues (178–79) by saying that he has taken forethought concerning the situation and he advises his daughters to guard his words by “recording” them (δελτουμένας). The word he uses here is not attested elsewhere, but it is derived from the word for “writing tablets,” and clearly the expectation here is that his listeners will write his words “not on notepads, but on the writing-tablets of the mind” (Sandin 2005: 122). The “writing,” then, is metaphorical, but it anticipates by some decades the earliest recorded literal writing down of a speech, said to have been the work of Antiphon, probably in the 420s BC (Cartledge 1990: 49). It is well to remember that the actor who played the role of Danaus, whether it was Aeschylus himself or another Athenian citizen, learned his lines from a written text of the play. This is true whether the actor read the lines himself or memorized them by having the director, that is, the author, read them off for him from the text, which must have been the method used for teaching the text to a chorus (Pelliccia 2003: 100). When Aeschylus, therefore, puts into the mouth of his character an image drawn from the world of writing in the context of preparing speakers to remember what and how to speak, he is prompted by his own experience as a dramatist and is not reflecting current rhetorical practice.

In the following lines (180–90), Danaus tells his daughters that he spies an approaching cloud of dust, indicating the likelihood that the ruler of the land is approaching. This serves as a signal to the audience that the entrance of a new character is to be expected, but it also indicates to the daughters that they need to be prepared to put into practice in short order the advice that their father is about to give. Since it is not known whether the Argive ruler will prove friendly or hostile, Danaus tells his daughters that it will be best in any event for them to seat themselves on the outcropping of rock that is sacred to the gods and that is apparently visible to the audience.

What follows, in lines 191–203, deserves to be quoted in full, in Holger Friis Johansen’s translation (1970: 67–69):

Now, go there as quickly as possible, and, solemnly keeping your white-wreathed suppliants’ boughs, the ornaments of Zeus the Pitiful, in your left hands, address words of pitifulness, lamentation, and sore need as answers to the strangers, as becomes newcomers, and tell them in clear language about this your flight which was not brought about by bloodshed. And let your speech be accompanied, first of all, by no arrogance, and let no impudence proceed from gentle eyes in < . . . > modest faces (?); moreover, do not be forward in your talk, nor lag behind: the race here is ready to take offence. And remember to be pliant: you are a fugitive from abroad in need of help. Arrogant speech does not become the weak.

It is easy to see in Danaus’ delivery of instructions to his daughters the procedure that was familiar to Aeschylus from directing the actors and chorus of his own plays. Indeed, it is entirely possible that Aeschylus, who was in his fifties or sixties when he produced this play, performed the role of Danaus himself (Sewell 2007: 61). The chorus are given directions on where to stand, how to behave (“solemnly”) and in which hand they are to hold the white-wreathed suppliants’ boughs. These branches, it is interesting to note, are described as “ornaments of Zeus” (ἁγάλματα Διός, 192), a phrase that is used later by Gorgias in his *Funeral Oration* (frag. 6 Diels–Kranz) to refer to battlefield trophies. Gorgias’ use of the expression, which ordinarily means “statues of Zeus,” is as distinctive as Aeschylus’ and may have been inspired by this very passage.

Danaus then tells his daughters what to say and how they should say it. They need to speak clearly and stress the fact that it is not in order to evade punishment for some crime that they are fleeing their homeland (196). In their character as foreigners (“as becomes newcomers”), they should respond to questions by using words that are designed to evoke pity and respect (194–95). There follow instructions in what Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* would later call “delivery,” *hypokrisis*. For Aristotle, *hypokrisis* is especially associated with the need for arousing pity, which is clearly what is at issue here. In fact, it is only in connection with pity that Aristotle mentions delivery at all in the first two books of his *Rhetoric* (1386a33), before he turns to his separate discussion of it in Book Three (1403b20–1404a19; Andersen 2003: 27). When he does begin to discuss delivery, which he does very briefly, he says that, while delivery is capable of producing the greatest effect, it has not yet been the object of systematic study. His explanation for this situation is extraordinarily interesting. According to Aristotle, even in the cases of

tragedy and epic recitation, delivery was late in developing. “For,” he says, “in the beginning the poets themselves acted out their tragedies” (1403b23–24). He does not, of course, need to mention that the performance of epic poems by their authors preceded the later practice of rhapsodic delivery. But what can Aristotle possibly be thinking when he refers to performance of *tragedies* by their poets themselves? Even if he is speaking in terms of the *Urform* of tragedy, as practiced by Thespis, which consisted of a single actor, presumably the poet himself, and a chorus, the poet must have instructed the members of the chorus how to deliver the lines that the poet had composed for them. But perhaps Aristotle regards the chorus as irrelevant in this connection. He does not, after all, mention choral lyric of the sort composed by Stesichorus, Alcman, and others, in which the poet himself instructed the chorus – of which he was in some instances certainly not a member, as poems were written for choruses of boys – on their delivery. Perhaps Aristotle felt that it was inappropriate to speak in terms of “delivery” in connection with a mass of voices 12, 24, or 50 strong. After all, the Greek word for delivery, *hypokrisis*, is derived from the word for stage actor, *hypokrites*, a word that would not have been used to refer to a member of a chorus (Ghiron-Bistagne 1976: 117). To give Aristotle the benefit of the doubt, then, let us say that what he means is that a consciousness of delivery did not arise in poetry until the introduction of the second actor to the tragic stage. If that is what he means, he is still referring to a period before the time when he himself considers rhetoric to have been invented, since the earliest surviving tragedy, Aeschylus’ *Persians*, requires two actors and dates to the time when Hiero still ruled as tyrant in Syracuse. More likely, however, is that Aristotle is either blind to or is deliberately ignoring the fact that, even in the time of Aeschylus, the poet needed to give instruction in delivery to at least one other actor performing in his play.

If that is the case, when Aristotle says that, in the case of poetry, delivery did not develop, or was not taken into consideration, until after such time as the poets themselves had ceased performing it, he can only be thinking in terms of a *written* text that needs to be “interpreted” in the absence of direct guidance from the poet. (“Interpreter” is another possible meaning of *hypokrites*, as “interpret” is one meaning of the verb from which it, like *hypokrisis*, is derived.) And he seems to be thinking only of *written* treatises when he says that the subject of delivery has not been dealt with in previous rhetorical study. He refers to a certain Glaucôn of Teos who, along with a few others, treated of delivery in connection with poetry.⁵ But in the case of delivery as applied to oratory, no technical treatise has yet been composed (οὐπω σύγκειται τέχνη, 1403b35), although, according to

Aristotle, Thrasymachus did make an effort to say a few things about it in his *Ways of Arousing Pity* (ἐν τοῖς Ἑλέοις, 1404a14–15).⁶ We saw in Chapter 1 (p. 13) that this discussion of delivery provides evidence of Aristotle’s prejudice in favor of experiencing tragedy through the written text rather than in the theater. We now see that that prejudice has apparently caused Aristotle either to ignore or to suppress the fact that the drama is fundamentally different from other forms of poetry, in that it alone is by its very nature required to contemplate, or to “theorize about,” the way in which it produces visual effects in performance. To Aristotle, however, theorizing is best left to the experts. For him, actors, including rhapsodes like Plato’s Ion (Chapter 3, pp. 47–48), literally do not know what they are doing and cannot impart to someone else the rationale of their craft, for “delivery is a matter of natural ability and is less susceptible [than style?] to being reduced to a set of textbook rules” (ἔστιν φύσεως τὸ ὑποκριτικὸν εἶναι, καὶ ἀτεχνότερον, 1404a15–16).

But, to return to Danaus and his instructions to his daughters, it is clear that Aeschylus recognizes that delivery is not simply a matter of inborn talent. It is something that can be taught.⁷ And, not confining himself to explaining *how* they are to behave, he even gives an explanation of *why* the prescribed manner of delivery is more likely to be conducive of success, what is surely the essence of “theorizing” about a given matter. For clearly Danaus has given thought to how his daughters’ words and manners are likely to strike their intended hearers. Twice he uses the language of that which is “becoming” (πρέπει), that is, he has thought himself into the mind of the audience: His daughters are to give answers “as becomes newcomers” (195) and they must avoid excessive self-assurance, since “arrogant speech does not become the weak” (203).⁸ Danaus has even taken into account the psychology of the prospective audience, a subject to which Aristotle will later devote a great deal of attention in Book Two of his *Rhetoric*. Specifically, Danaus recognizes that citizens of Argos are especially given to the emotion of envy, or *phthonos*: “the race here is ready to take offence” (κάρτ’ ἐπίφθονον γένος, 201; see Huart 1968: 398 for the meaning of ἐπίφθονος). For this reason, his daughters will need to take particular care over how they express themselves for, as Aristotle makes clear, it is especially difficult to arouse pity from those activated by envy (*Rhetoric* 1387b22–88a29; Leighton 1996: 208–9).

There seems to be little doubt that, in putting this speech into the mouth of Danaus, Aeschylus is drawing on his own experience as tragic playwright, as actor, and as director. For he found himself in a position unlike that of any previous poet, the position of composing words to be spoken, not only to an audience but also to a character on stage who might later be expected to respond to those words. Because

of this experience, the tragic poet cannot have helped contemplating, even “theorizing about,” his manner of expression differently from the way in which Homer or Pindar created their poetic works. We saw in Chapter 3 that the tragedian was the first poet who could not enlist divine assistance by invoking the aid of the Muse in the course of his composition. Paradoxically, by relinquishing his own voice the tragic poet acquired an unprecedented power, a power previously felt to emanate from the gods. Instead of asking the Muse to supply him with words and thoughts and the capacity to transmit them, he was now the one who instructed others in what to say and how to say it (Lada-Richards 2002: 71). And the “others” he was instructing included such imposing figures as Odysseus and Ajax, Apollo and Athena, or rather Athenian citizens playing those roles. Whether it was caused by the inaccessibility of the Muse or, as we would be inclined to put it, by the nature of tragic composition, the dramatist was necessarily confronted with a new way of thinking about his craft, a way that required him to be more explicit, at least in his own mind, about how his effects were created. Another way of putting this might be to say that the tragic poet was forced to become more “self-conscious” about his composition. Now, this concept of self-consciousness, which has no equivalent in the language or thought of the ancient Greeks, has been invoked repeatedly in recent years in connection with rhetoric and with the influence of rhetoric on the tragic poets of the later fifth century, particularly Euripides,⁹ and it will be interesting to examine the concept briefly here.

We earlier noted Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of observing or discovering in every case presented the possible means of persuasion.” Here is Thomas Cole’s somewhat more verbose definition (1991a: ix): “a speaker’s or writer’s self-conscious manipulation of his medium with a view to ensuring his message as favorable a reception as possible on the part of the particular audience being addressed.” Although Cole has expressed himself very differently from Aristotle – perhaps out of a self-conscious desire to avoid the appearance of too close a dependency – his definition is in essence the same, except for the intrusion of “self-conscious.” That he regards the inclusion of this element as obligatory is clear from what immediately follows: “The self-consciously manipulative character of the process distinguishes rhetoric from eloquence, which may be unpremeditated and stem from nothing more than a natural knack for clear and expressive utterance.” That is, Nestor and Odysseus, Homer and Pindar, may have been eloquent, but they cannot be spoken of as practitioners of rhetoric since they did not self-consciously manipulate their medium of expression in a premeditated fashion. Could there be anything more self-conscious or more premeditated than Danaus’ instructions to his

daughters in *Suppliant Women*, produced when Protagoras and Gorgias, and even Gorgias' alleged teacher Empedocles (Radermacher 1951: B.I.1), were in their twenties? Yes: Aeschylus' composition of those words for Danaus to deliver.

Still, Michael Lloyd points to "rhetorical self-consciousness" as the area in which "the impact of contemporary rhetoric on Euripides' *agon* speeches shows itself most clearly" (1992: 34–35). According to Lloyd (21), it is "this self-consciousness, as much as anything, which distinguishes Euripides' more rhetorical speeches from speeches in Homer, Herodotus, and Sophocles." This statement is accompanied by a footnote that refers to Gregory Hutchinson's note (1985: 42) on lines 1–9 of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* for "some rule-proving exceptions." Actually, none of the rule-proving exceptions cited is as striking as the lines on which Hutchinson is commenting, the very opening of Aeschylus' play, staged in Athens in 467 BC, the same year Hiero was deposed as tyrant of Syracuse. At the start of the play, Eteocles addresses the assembled Thebans, who are expecting an imminent enemy attack on the city, saying, "Citizens of Thebes, it is incumbent upon the man who guides the ship of state to suit his words to the circumstances (χρὴ λέγειν τὰ καίρια, 1)." This is the earliest occurrence of an expression that Friis Johansen and Whittle describe as "characteristic of tragedy."¹⁰ Elsewhere in Aeschylus, for example, with her first words upon returning to the stage after murdering Agamemnon Clytaemestra says that, while she had said many things earlier to suit the moment (πολλῶν πάροιθεν καιρίως εἰρημένων, *Agamemnon* 1372), she feels no compunction about contradicting them now that her enemy lies dead. Similarly, in *Libation Bearers*, when Orestes gives instructions to the chorus before he embarks on his dangerous mission, he enjoins them to keep silent when silence is called for and, when necessary, to say what is appropriate to the moment (λέγειν τὰ καίρια, 582). While this expression is common among the tragic poets, its proper home ought to be in the works of the rhetorical theorists and practitioners, since it means, literally, "to say the things appropriate to the moment, to the *kairos*," that is, to say what may be conducive to persuasion at one particular time but may not be appropriate otherwise, indeed, may be palpably untrue. As it happens, neither the expression nor the concept seems to appear in fifth-century oratory. We are told, however, that Gorgias had an interest in the notion of *kairos*, although our information is unhelpful and contradictory. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Literary Composition* 12 = frag. 13 Diels–Kranz), Gorgias was the first to write about *kairos* in connection with rhetoric, although what he wrote is said to have been unremarkable. The context, however, in which Dionysius makes this statement relates not

so much to matters of opportunity as to appropriateness in an aesthetic sense, and Usher (1985: 87) aptly translates *kairos* here as “taste.” On the other hand, Philostratus, in the preface to Book One of his *Lives of the Sophists* (= test. 1a Diels-Kranz), speaks of *kairos* in connection with Gorgias as the supposed pioneer of the art of impromptu speaking, saying that Gorgias would spontaneously expound upon whatever theme the audience might propose, “submitting to the contingency of the moment (ἐφ’ ἑαυτῷ τῷ καιρῷ).” Modern scholars have attributed great significance to the concept of *kairos* in the thinking of Gorgias, but unfortunately the evidence available to us is so meager that nothing more substantial than blithe speculation is possible.¹¹

Regardless of the extent and the seriousness of Gorgias’ theorizing about *kairos* and rhetoric, we can see that already Aeschylus recognized the importance of the moment to the effectiveness of persuasive speech. Eteocles opens his speech, and the play, by impressing on the citizens of Thebes the necessity, at this crucial time, for their leader to tailor his words to the occasion and, indeed, his speech matches the urgency of the moment, using the word “now” no fewer than three times in 15 lines (10, 21, 24). More opportunistically, Clytaemestra begins her speech by acknowledging that in the past she was constrained by circumstance to say what occasion demanded, the implication being that now, in the absence of such constraint, she can speak openly and, thus, be more readily believed at the present time. She speaks, consequently, with shocking frankness, and her speech is, frankly, shocking. I am not suggesting that Aeschylus has necessarily influenced Gorgias’ thinking – whatever that thinking was – with regard to the importance of *kairos* in public speaking, but the fact that Aeschylus has highlighted it by promoting it to these prominent locations indicates, at the very least, a degree of self-consciousness comparable to that of, say, an Antiphon or an Andocides. And yet Michael Lloyd singles out “rhetorical self-consciousness” as a significant indication that Euripides, in contrast to earlier poets, has been “influenced by contemporary trends in rhetoric” (1992: 35). What is more, Lloyd continues, it is not only the case that Euripides exhibits a marked susceptibility to rhetorical influence, it “is also a matter of the characters themselves being represented as skilled speakers.” But how can Euripides, or any dramatist, exhibit rhetorical influence other than by representing the characters of the drama as skilled in speaking?

This question points to a problem that faces anyone who speaks of “self-consciousness” in connection with Attic tragedy, in which, as we have seen, the author is prevented by the rules of the genre from expressing himself in his own voice, in contrast, say, to the practice of

such modern playwrights as Voltaire, Hugo, and Shaw, whose printed dramas are accompanied by prefaces in which the author self-consciously articulates his literary intentions. Self-consciousness, after all, requires that there be a self that is conscious of itself. In Attic tragedy the dramatist can only express himself through other selves; the characters of the drama have only a fictive self that cannot in any sense be conscious or, therefore, self-conscious. Ruth Scodel faces this issue and addresses it in her article on Euripidean verbal performance (1999–2000). For Scodel, the verbal markers of self-consciousness with which characters in Euripides frame some of their speeches serve to signal to the audience in the theater that this speech is to be evaluated by the standards of “verbal performance.” But we have seen that, already in the 460s and 450s, Aeschylus could put verbal markers of self-consciousness into the mouths of Eteocles and Clytaemestra and could dramatize a father teaching his daughters how to mount a persuasive performance of the self. Must we then assume that Euripides, in the 430s and 420s, was reflecting the influence of rhetorical theory,¹² the nature of which can only be divined by speculation? Is it not more likely that Euripides was continuing and extending a practice attested in the work of his dramatic predecessor, familiarity with which is not subject to doubt?

In addition to self-consciousness, the two features that Lloyd points to in Euripides as “hallmarks of speeches influenced by the new rhetoric” are “the argument from probability and the formal organization of speeches” (1992: 20–21). Again, it is not my intention to single out for special criticism Lloyd’s work; I refer to him because he fairly and concisely reflects the *communis opinio* in general and, in the case of these two features of fifth-century rhetoric, he names the only two items for which we have a modicum of ancient evidence as having been introduced by the supposed inventors of rhetoric, Corax and Tisias. There are, however, serious difficulties involved in attributing either the argument from probability or the formal organization of speeches to these Sicilian rhetoricians or, indeed, to anyone in the fifth century BC. David Timmerman, Edward Schiappa, and Wilfred Major (2010) have recently shown that the ancient evidence regarding the articulation of speeches not only is inconsistent with regard to the number of parts into which theory prescribed that a speech be divided, but is incompatible with the practice of surviving fifth-century speeches. Further, they argue that fifth-century practice in the articulation of speeches can be accounted for without recourse to explicit theory and can be attributed instead to the common practice of employing ring composition. They note, without mentioning tragedy, that ring composition is a standard feature of poetry as early as the Homeric epics.¹³ The argument from

probability, too, can be found in Homeric epic, but it is much less conspicuous there than ring composition.

Because of the importance accorded to it by Plato and Aristotle, the argument from probability, or likelihood (*eikos*), has been the object of extensive study on the part of those concerned with the early history of rhetoric.¹⁴ Plato represents Socrates in conversation with Phaedrus, discussing the view of “the experts,” who teach that, when speaking in court one ought to go after what is probable (*eikos*) even in preference to the truth. According to Socrates, Phaedrus is intimately familiar with the theories of Tisias, and he elicits Phaedrus’ approval for the following summary of Tisias’ teaching with regard to the argument from probability (*Phaedrus* 273b–c, in Rowe’s 1986 translation):

[H]e wrote to the effect that if a weak but brave man beats up a strong coward and steals his cloak or something else of his, and is taken to court for it, then neither party should speak the truth; the coward should say that he wasn’t beaten up by the brave man single-handed, while the other man should establish that they were on their own together, and should resort to the well-known argument, “how could a man like me have assaulted a man like him?”

With characteristic irony, Socrates introduces and concludes this account using the language of likelihood himself, saying that Tisias published his findings, so it seems (ὥς ἔοικε, 273b3), because he had made a brilliant scientific discovery and then exclaiming over how brilliantly Tisias seems (ἔοικεν, 273c7) to have discovered this recondite technique. The context makes clear that Socrates does not consider it a particularly brilliant accomplishment to relegate truth to the status of a secondary consideration. The irony suggests that the “discovery” may not in fact be original with Tisias, and Socrates’ reference to “the well-known argument” does not commit him to an assertion of whether the argument was well known before, or only after, Tisias produced it.

Aristotle refers to this same type of argument, attributing it not to Tisias but to Corax:

The *Art* of Corax is made up of this topic: for example, if a weak man were charged with assault, he should be acquitted as not being a likely suspect for the charge; for it is not probable [that a weak man would attack another]. And if he is a likely suspect, for example, if he is strong, [he should be acquitted]; for it is not likely [that he would start a fight] for the very reason that it was going to seem probable.¹⁵

There are obvious differences between the two accounts, even

apart from the discrepant attributions, and scholars have fastened upon the differences in an effort to discredit one account or the other. In particular, Plato's version emphasizes the discrepancy between likelihood and fact, whereas Aristotle's is more concerned with the likelihood of the disputants' motivations. For Plato, the stronger man must lie about the number of assailants while the weaker man must assert that his physical inferiority shows that he cannot have done what he in fact did. For Aristotle there are two distinct scenarios, in which first a weaker man and then a stronger is charged with assault; in the second, the accused must argue that his innocence is proved by the unlikelihood of his so much as contemplating assaulting a weaker man, since he would be likely to anticipate the likelihood of his being a suspect.¹⁶ George Goebel (1989b; cf. Gagarin 1994: 51) makes as good a case as the evidence will allow for the view that the two versions are merely "different, but complementary" (52) accounts of a discovery made by Corax and committed to writing only by Corax' pupil Tisias. Even if we accept Goebel's view of the matter, the fact remains that a form of this very argument, accompanied by the "technical" language of likelihood, is found already in the "Homeric" *Hymn to Hermes* (Görgemanns 1976). On two occasions in the poem, Hermes defends himself against charges of cattle rustling. Improbable though it may be, he did in fact steal the cattle of Apollo despite his not yet being one day old. He takes advantage of the unlikelihood of the situation by arguing that he cannot be the thief, first when addressing Apollo, then when addressing Zeus. Confronted by Apollo, Hermes denies that he has so much as seen the cattle in question; he cannot be guilty of stealing the 50 head of cattle, as he is a mere babe in arms, saying, "In no way do I resemble (ἔοικα, 265) a strong man who drives off cattle." The other gods, Hermes assures Apollo, would be astounded by the thought that a newborn could do such a thing. "What you are saying is outlandish (ἄπρεπέως ἀγορεύεις, 272)." Hermes even offers to swear a great oath on the head of his father Zeus (274). Later, Hermes repeats to Zeus his denial that he resembles a strong man (377) and renews his offer to swear an oath that he is innocent (383).

The argument used by Hermes in this hymn "is, it seems, the earliest attempt to employ argument from probability" (Kennedy 1963: 40). The qualification "it seems" is appropriate, since we do not know the date of the *Hymn to Hermes*. While the hymn is generally thought to date from the late sixth century BC (Janko 1982: 133–49; N.J. Richardson 2010: 24), some scholars have argued that it belongs rather to the fifth (Eitrem 1906: 282; Graefe 1963). Indeed, Herwig Görgemanns (1976: 117) uses the very similarity of the argument here to what is attributed to the earliest Sicilian rhetoricians as evidence

that the hymn belongs to a stage in the history of rhetoric shortly before the time of Corax and Tisias. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to use the *Hymn to Hermes* to argue that Corax and Tisias were not responsible for introducing the argument from likelihood, particularly since the form of the argument used in the hymn is of the less sophisticated type that denies merely the facts of the case: Hermes, like the weaker man in Plato's version of the argument, denies that he can be guilty on the grounds that it is improbable that he can have done what he is accused of doing. It is conceivable – although, as we will see, not necessarily likely – that the breakthrough made by the Sicilian rhetoricians consists in the extension of this form of argumentation about facts, which may well have been familiar from earlier applications of it, to a more creative and sophisticated form of argumentation about motives. The one form argues retrospectively that X cannot have happened because of the improbability of its having happened; the other argues that a particular person would, in all likelihood, have prospectively weighed the consequences of doing X.

Arguments of the latter type are found in fifth-century tragedy, and scholars have generally assumed that their appearance there is attributable to the influence of the newly discovered art of rhetoric. The absence of such argumentation from the plays of Aeschylus seems to validate this view, and George Goebel goes so far as to note that the argument from probability is “conspicuously” absent from the trial scene in *Eumenides*.¹⁷ The fact that the argument from likelihood appears occasionally in Sophocles and more frequently in the younger Euripides appears to provide evidence of the increasing adoption of rhetorical modes of argumentation on the part of the fifth-century dramatists (although the surviving Euripidean corpus is more than twice the size of the Sophoclean, so that comparative frequency may not be significant). Let us look at the examples, beginning with Sophocles. *Trachiniae* is often regarded as among Sophocles' earliest surviving plays.¹⁸ In the course of it, the messenger, contradicting the earlier account by Lichas, tells Deianeira that her husband Heracles is inflamed with passion for Iole, for which reason it is not likely (οὐδ' εἰκός, 368) that Heracles' motive is merely to keep her as a slave. In *Oedipus the King*, the date of which is not known,¹⁹ Oedipus accuses Creon of conspiring with the prophet Teiresias to bring about Oedipus' overthrow so that Creon can rule Thebes himself. Creon comes onto the scene for the purpose of defending himself against Oedipus' charges (513–15). His speech of defense opens with an argument in which he shows that his current position is such that it is unlikely in the extreme that he would be motivated to wish for Oedipus' overthrow: He now has all the power and privileges that he could

hope for, without the risk that normally comes with being the sole ruler in the state. Of course, he neglects to mention that the primary risk that comes with being the sole ruler in the state is precisely the danger of being overthrown by the second-in-command, a danger that was as well attested in Sophocles' time as it is today. We find a "fairly unostentatious" (M. Lloyd 1992: 29) instance of the argument from probability also in Sophocles' *Antigone*, a play generally considered to be earlier than *Oedipus the King*.²⁰ Again it is Creon who uses the argument, but this time it is not to defend himself against accusations and it is not his own motivation that is at issue, but that of the gods. Creon has decreed that the corpse of Polyneices be denied burial, but he has just been informed that, mysteriously, the well-guarded corpse has received a light covering of dust, and the chorus suggest that it may have been the work of the gods (278–79). Creon angrily denies that it could have been the gods' doing, since they would have no plausible motive for showing respect to a man who, like Polyneices, has taken up arms against his own city (282–89).

Arguments of this type, in which the speaker points out the unlikelihood of someone's being motivated by X, are found more frequently in Euripides, particularly in his earlier plays, than in Sophocles. In *Hecuba*, a product, as we have seen (Chapter 7, p. 121), of the mid-420s, the title character is engaged in a verbal *agon* with the Thracian Polymestor, whom she has just blinded as punishment for his having killed her son. Polymestor does not deny having killed Hecuba's son, but he attempts to justify it to Agamemnon by claiming that he did it as a favor to the Greeks and to their commander, Agamemnon himself. Hecuba responds by rejecting the alleged motivation, saying that barbarians never could or would be friends to the Greeks (1199–1201). She then goes on to underline the absurdity of Polymestor's claim with a series of rhetorical questions, speculating as to the return that he might have expected for this favor (1201–5): Was he hoping for a connection with one of the Greeks through marriage? Was he hoping to avert a possible future invasion of his territory by the Greeks? No, it was only Polymestor's lusting after Trojan gold that could have driven him to such a crime (1205–7). In view of the fact that Paris, Hecuba's son, went to great and perilous lengths to secure a marriage with a Greek woman, the marriage motif seems especially inappropriate in this context. As we will see, however, marriage figures in these arguments with remarkable frequency.

Hecuba is engaged in another *agon* in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, securely dated to 415 BC. This time her opponent is Helen, who had justified, or rather excused, her behavior in running off with Hecuba's son by blaming the goddesses involved in the judgment of Paris.

Hecuba dismisses the story of the judgment, arguing that Hera and Athena cannot have been motivated by a desire for first prize in a beauty contest. As she had done in the earlier play, Hecuba uses a series of rhetorical questions to point up the improbability of such a notion (976–81): Did Hera, the wife of Zeus, seek to secure a better husband than the one she has? Was Athena, the perpetual virgin, desirous of marriage at all? No sensible person will be persuaded by arguments that attribute to the gods a lack of good sense (981–82). Like Athena, the title character of Euripides' *Hippolytus* is also resolutely opposed to marriage. Although he is entirely innocent of the charge, his stepmother Phaedra has left behind a suicide note accusing Hippolytus of rape. He defends himself before his angry father Theseus by arguing, in part, that he lacked any plausible motivation for having committed the crime. Rather tactlessly he asks his aggrieved father whether Phaedra was so beautiful that he could not have found anyone more attractive (1009–10). Or was he hoping, though a bastard, to succeed to the throne after his father's death by marrying his widow (1010–11)? He continues by using the same argument Creon uses in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, namely, that his current position is preferable to that of ruler, which is fraught with peril (1017–20). Here, Hippolytus is concerned to show that no possible motive can plausibly be ascribed to him for having committed the crime. In his defense he is refuting the charges brought by his father, who had similarly used an argument from likelihood to anticipate, and preemptively dismiss, an argument that Hippolytus himself might use. The evidence of Phaedra's suicide note seems probative of Hippolytus' guilt, but Theseus suggests that perhaps Hippolytus will argue that she fabricated the charge – which is in fact the case – for some reason or other. But no plausible reason can be imagined. Was her hatred of Hippolytus so intense, because of his bastard status, that she bartered her precious life merely to satisfy her enmity (962–65)? Or will Hippolytus argue that lack of sexual restraint belongs exclusively to women and not to men (966–67)?

Hippolytus is usually considered to have been produced in 428 BC, although John Gibert (1997) has shown that the confidence with which that date has been assigned may be misplaced. If that date is correct, it was produced only a few years before Euripides' *Andromache*, which probably belongs, like *Hecuba*, to the years around 425 (M. Lloyd 2005: 12–13; Stevens 1971: 15–19). In this play Andromache is the concubine of Neoptolemus, and she is being persecuted by Hermione, the legitimate wife of Neoptolemus, who claims that Andromache is attempting to supplant her as mistress of the royal house. In her defense against Hermione's charges Andromache uses an argument from likelihood, accompanied by the

now familiar series of rhetorical questions.²¹ She challenges Hermione by asking what legitimate motive could have induced her to attempt to oust Hermione from her rightful position (192–93). Textual corruption prevents us from knowing exactly what Andromache says next, but it appears that she asks something involving the relative strength of the two women’s native cities (194–95). Since Hermione’s Sparta has recently destroyed Andromache’s Troy and enslaved its population, it is unlikely that a citizen of the latter would be in a position to usurp the place of a citizen of the former. Next she asks whether she could have been motivated by confidence in her physical prowess to wrest power from the younger and more vigorous Hermione (196–98). Was she eager to bear children to Neoptolemus, children who would inevitably share her servile status and prove a burden to her (199–200)? Would she expect her sons to be treated as royalty when their mother was the widow of the Greeks’ chief foe, Hector (201–4)? The utter implausibility of any of these motives shows that, if Neoptolemus shows any favor to Andromache, it can only be because he finds Hermione personally repellent (205–6). Later in the play Hermione finds that she herself needs to mount a defense of her treatment of Andromache. She does not deny that the accusations are valid, but she shifts the blame onto the baneful influence exerted by other women. Without their insidious insinuations, she would have had no reasonable motive for acting as she did. What need was there for her to keep watch over her husband when she had everything she needed (938–39)? She possessed great wealth, she ruled the household, and she could be sure that her own children, being legitimate, would be the masters of Andromache’s bastards (940–42).

There is one more occurrence of the argument from probability in Euripides, and it may be the earliest of all. It appears not in one of the surviving plays but in a lengthy fragment of *Cretans* (= frag. 472e Kannicht). Metrical and other considerations suggest that *Cretans* may date to a time near 438 BC, the time of *Alcestis*, the earliest preserved play of Euripides (Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995: 58; Rivier 1960: 54). The parchment fragment contains the whole of Pasiphae’s speech of defense, addressed to her husband Minos. She begins (4–5) by saying that she cannot deny that she has been unfaithful to Minos. (She has given birth to the Minotaur, after all, whose semibovine form indisputably convicts her of having mated with an ox.) She can, however, categorically deny that her behavior was the result of a moral failure on her part, which would have been the case had she allowed herself to be seduced by a member of her own species (6–8). As it is, she can only have been the unwilling victim of an insane passion sent by the gods (9–10), “for there is no likelihood” (ἔχει γὰρ

οὐδὲν εἰκός, 11). Presumably she means that there is no credible explanation for her having spontaneously wished for intercourse with a ruminant bovid, as she goes on to pose a series of rhetorical questions designed to impress upon Minos how absurd a notion that is (Dolfi 1984: 135; Goebel 1983: 299). What could she have seen that would so inflame desire (11–12)? Was he so seductively dressed? Were his hair, his eyes, his beard so irresistibly radiant (13–15)? Not content to shift the blame for her behavior onto the gods, whom she represents as merely the proximate cause of her actions, she continues by using a type of argument that we will have occasion to examine in the following chapter, claiming that, not only is she herself not guilty, but also it is her very accuser Minos who is at fault. For it was his failure to sacrifice the magnificent beast, as he should have done, that caused the gods to inflict this horrible punishment on the royal family.

This speech of Pasiphae's is especially notable, because of the early date of the play from which it comes, because this "is the only place in Euripides where the word εἰκός actually appears in the course of a probability argument" (Goebel 1983: 290), and because of the skillful way in which the argument is applied. As George Goebel goes on to say (299–300), Pasiphae

both uses the argument and challenges its most fundamental premise. The tacit premise of the argument from psychological probability is that human behaviour is rational and predictable; on this assumption one can argue from particular circumstances to probable reaction. Pasiphae, in effect, compares the result of this procedure with the truth, and concludes from their inconsistency that the premise must, in her case at least, be false.

Goebel's conclusion, based upon his analysis of the sophistication with which Euripides handles the argument here, is that in this speech Euripides provides "striking evidence of his familiarity with judicial argument." Pasiphae's speech is "judicial" in the sense that she is, like some of the other Euripidean characters who employ this type of argument, defending herself against accusations of wrongdoing in a manner familiar from defense speeches in the orators that were delivered in a forensic – or, in the case of the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon and the *Palamedes* of Gorgias, a quasi-forensic – setting. But none of the surviving orations is demonstrably earlier than *Cretans*, or even demonstrably earlier than, say, *Andromache*. And, as Goebel himself notes, the argument that Pasiphae uses is "not one that would have been of any practical use in a court of law" (297), so that one wonders why we should look to the law courts in search of Euripides' inspiration. All we are left with in support of the notion that Euripides here exhibits the results of "rhetorical" influence is the rather vague

evidence of Plato and Aristotle to the effect that one or two Sicilians, about whom we know nothing at all, introduced the argument from likelihood, sometime after the fall of the western Greek tyrants. As we have seen, even the evidence from Plato (on whom Aristotle may have been dependent) does not unambiguously indicate that Plato thought that the argument from probability was original with Tisias. We also saw that the argument from probability can be found in the “Homeric” *Hymn to Hermes*, which is likely to be earlier than the time of Tisias and Corax.

If we are to believe Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1402a17–18), “The *Art* of Corax is made up of this topic,” namely, the argument from probability. It is difficult to believe that Corax’s *Art* – whether it was a theoretical treatise or, as Thomas Cole has attractively argued (1991a: 82–94), a collection of models to be imitated by aspirants to the craft – can have concerned itself solely with the one type of argument. If it did so restrict itself, in what sense can so limited a document constitute the charter for the new field of rhetoric? If not, then Aristotle is either misinformed or has misrepresented the situation. And if this one, precious piece of “information” is not credible, how much of Aristotle’s (and Plato’s) version of the early history of rhetoric deserves to be taken seriously? The one other precious piece of information, that the fall of the Sicilian tyrants inspired, “after a long interval,” a number of lawsuits for the recovery of private property which in turn awakened a need to learn the rudiments of persuasive speech (Chapter 1, p. 6), is on its own interesting and perhaps even plausible. But its plausibility is diminished when combined with the claim about the argument from probability. For the argument from probability is not at home in the mouth of a plaintiff seeking restitution; rather, as most of the instances that we have examined attest, it is especially appropriate for use by someone attempting to refute charges of wrongdoing. Such is the case with Andromache, Creon, Hermes, Hermione, Hippolytus, and Pasiphae. And such is the case in the scenarios that Plato and Aristotle attribute to the founders of rhetoric.

In any event, it is difficult to see why both Plato and Aristotle attach so much importance to the argument from probability, to the point of appearing to make its “discovery” the foundation of the rhetorical art. The most reasonable explanation is that Plato has misleadingly exaggerated its importance to suit his own purposes and prejudices,²² constructing and playing up a rigid opposition between probability and truth, and influencing his Academic pupil. Plato wishes to represent rhetoric as being about nothing but probabilities. Aristotle knows better, but still claims that the *Art* of Corax is concerned exclusively with the argument from likelihood. In his own

expansive treatment of rhetoric in three books, the argument from likelihood plays a very minor role. In fact, Aristotle spends little time in his *Rhetoric* discussing likelihood (*eikos*), treating it briefly only in Chapters 19 and 25 of Book Two, apart from his reference to Corax at the end of Chapter 24. The distribution of the word εἰκός (and the related adverb, εἰκότως) in the Aristotelian corpus proves revelatory. Apart from the spurious *Problemata*, in which the word occurs 71 times, the largest number of occurrences in a single work is indeed in the *Rhetoric*, where it appears 51 times.²³ The next highest figure is, perhaps surprisingly, for the *Poetics*, with 25 occurrences. This number is remarkable, considering that *Poetics* is less than a quarter the length of *Rhetoric*. Indeed, although the *Poetics* comprises only one percent of the Aristotelian corpus (10,549 words in a corpus of over a million words), it contains nearly 10 percent of the occurrences (25 out of 254). In the *Poetics*, then, we find an occurrence rate of a form of εἰκός of 2.3699 per 1,000 words. This rate is exceeded among the works of Aristotle only by *De divinatione per somnum*, with an occurrence rate of 2.3809 per 1,000 words (three occurrences in a text of merely 1,260 words). The only other work in the corpus that has a rate of more than one occurrence per 1,000 words is the *Rhetoric*, with a rate of 1.1493 (51 occurrences in 44,373 words). The significance of these figures is that, as even Aristotle recognized, the contriver of tragic plots must be every bit as concerned with probability as the orator in the law court, perhaps even more so. As Aristotle says, “the poet’s job is not to tell what has happened but the kinds of things that *can* happen, i.e., the kind of events that are possible according to probability (κατὰ τὸ εἰκός) or necessity.”²⁴ The worst kind of plot is one in which there is no probability to the sequence of episodes (1451b34–36). As is the case with plots, so with tragic characters, the poet must seek out what is either necessary or probable, “so that it will be either necessary or probable that the kind of person before us say or do a certain kind of thing” (1454a33–36, Else 1957: 463). The best kind of tragic recognition scene is one in which the dramatic effect arises from a probable sequence of events (1455a16–17). The poet should even be willing to represent plausible impossibilities in preference to possible, but implausible, events (1460a27–28).

Aristotle’s literary criticism, unlike his rhetorical theory, is saturated with a concern for probability. Neil O’Sullivan (1995) tries to make the case that Aristotle’s understanding of the importance of probability in his discussion of tragedy has its “obvious source” (54) in the work of Tisias and Corax. Even if Aristotle needed the promptings of rhetorical theory to teach him that dramatic plots and characters are more successful if they are believable – which I find hard to believe – men of the theater did not, and do not.²⁵ Attic

playwrights learned their lessons from the immediate reaction of the audience in the theater, the verdict of the judges, and the potential for mockery by rival poets. The clearest example of this last is the scene in Euripides' *Electra* in which the title character implicitly takes Aeschylus to task for the implausibility of the recognition scene in *Libation Bearers* (M. Davies 1998). Electra has been told by an old man that clandestine offerings were found at the tomb of Agamemnon, perhaps brought by Orestes, who may have secretly returned from exile. He urges Electra to go to the tomb to confirm that it was indeed the work of Orestes, by comparing her own hair with the lock of hair left by the mysterious visitor. Electra mocks the old man for being so foolish as to imagine that her brave brother would slink home surreptitiously in fear of Aegisthus (524–26). Of course, Orestes has done just that, both in Aeschylus' play and in Euripides' own version, so that the effect is more to underline Electra's capacity for self-delusion than to serve any literary-critical purpose. What follows, however, is manifestly directed at the recognition scene in the older playwright's work, in which Electra notes the similarity of the dedicated lock to her own hair (*Libation Bearers* 174–76) and Orestes, having emerged from hiding, uses the resemblance as one means of convincing his sister that he is indeed her longed-for brother (229–30). Euripides' Electra will have none of it. She asks, rhetorically, how a man's hair and that of a delicate woman can be compared, not to mention the fact that unrelated persons might have similar hair (527–31). Undaunted, the old man perseveres, inviting Electra then to see if footprints left by the visitor might match her own (532–33). Electra does not expect to find any footprints, asking, again rhetorically, how imprints could be made on rocky ground; even if there are prints, a brother's and a sister's would not match (534–37). This too represents an implicit criticism of *Libation Bearers*, where Aeschylus' Electra is excited at finding "evidence" of footprints that match her own (205–6), which Euripides' Electra finds ludicrously improbable.

George Goebel discusses this scene at some length (1983: 347–56), taking it as a parody of the widespread use of the argument from probability, which "implies an audience that recognizes the technique, but is no longer impressed by it" (356). If this is the case, the context, with its clear and repeated references to an earlier tragic scene, would seem to make it more likely that Euripides has tragedy in mind than oratory. There is, after all, nothing in this passage from *Electra* other than the argument from probability that might prompt the audience in the theater to imagine that what are parodied are the practices of contemporary rhetoric. And the evidence for the existence of the argument from probability in oratory before the date of Euripides' *Electra* is tenuous.²⁶ For students of the early history of rhetoric, then,

the argument from probability may well be a red herring, or even Plato's version of a *poisson d'avril*. That being the case, any attempt to show that Euripides' use of this type of argument constitutes evidence of rhetorical influence is misguided. In fact, it can be shown that the Euripidean passages we considered earlier have a very different ancestry and the form that they take can be explained as arising from within a purely poetic tradition. As we have seen, all those occurrences of the argument from probability are concerned in one way or another with marriage. Pasiphae's argument turns on the unsuitability of an ox as her mate. Andromache points to her servile status and the fact that she is Hector's widow in arguing that she cannot reasonably have expected to replace Hermione as Neoptolemus' legitimate wife, while Hermione uses her own status as Neoptolemus' legitimate wife to argue that she cannot reasonably have been expected to act as she did without the nefarious influence of others. Hippolytus argues that because of his illegitimate birth, he cannot have imagined that he would be a suitable husband to his father's widow. Hecuba in *Trojan Women* uses the patent absurdity of Hera's desiring a better husband or Athena's desiring a husband at all to undermine Helen's claims regarding the judgment of Paris. And the Hecuba in the play named after her surprisingly imports the idea of marriage into the speech in which she impugns Polymestor's motives, asking whether he, a barbarian, imagined that marriage with a Greek was a reasonable possibility. Even the messenger's argument from probability in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* is concerned with the dangers to Deianeira's marriage posed by the arrival of a rival.

No one, apparently, has commented on the consistency with which marriage features in the arguments from likelihood that these characters employ, perhaps because scholars have been distracted by their conviction that Euripides, in particular, can only have derived such arguments from his tutors in rhetoric. Either the connection between marriage and the argument from likelihood is pure coincidence or some more reasonable explanation is needed. As it happens, the connection can be found in a much earlier and more eminent authority. In Book Twenty-One of Homer's *Odyssey*, the hero has returned home to Ithaca disguised as a beggar. When the suitors have tried and failed to string the bow of Odysseus, a feat which would have entitled one of them to claim the hand of Penelope, Odysseus asks that he, though worn out with age and mendicancy, be given a chance at the bow. He is reviled and insulted by the suitor Antinous, but Penelope comes to the defense of the stranger, addressing Antinous and the other suitors as follows (314–19, in Lattimore's 1967 translation):

Do you imagine that if this stranger, in the confidence
of hands and strength, should string the great bow of
Odysseus³¹⁵

that he would take me home with him and make me his wife?

No,

he himself has no such thought in the heart within him.

Let none of you be sorrowful at heart in his feasting

here, for such a reason. There is no likelihood of it (οὐδὲ μὲν
οὐδὲ ἔοικε).

These lines are filled with the elements that we have seen in nearly all of the instances of the argument from probability in Euripides. Penelope uses the characteristic “rhetorical” question, which she answers herself, to convey the manifest unlikelihood of the stranger’s being motivated by an expectation of marriage to the leading woman of Ithaca. Because of the obvious disparity in status between Penelope and the stranger, the latter is as inappropriate a spouse as Polymestor, Hippolytus, Andromache, or the bull from the sea. Penelope even uses what would later become the technical terminology (ἔοικε) for talking about the argument from probability. In Homer, while the word *eikos* itself does not occur, words belonging to the same family appear frequently, with a range of meanings having to do with resemblance and propriety, but not likelihood. It is presumably this which has prevented scholars from recognizing that Homer is here exhibiting an argument from probability. Careful studies of this family of words have been undertaken recently by Katerina Synodinou (1981) and, for Homer specifically, Joachim Dalfen (1984). The latter notes (21–22) that words from this family are often found in Homer in connection with marriage, to denote the suitability or otherwise of a potential couple, and he proposes that the stranger is in fact the subject of ἔοικε at 319, so that the meaning is, “He is not at all appropriate (as a mate for Penelope).” Synodinou (25–26) also considers the expression to refer to propriety rather than likelihood, and, given the way this family of words is used in Homer, it may well be that this is what the poet intended. Still, Roger Dawe (1993), like Lattimore, uses the language of probability in his translation, while acknowledging the departure from regular Homeric usage. Dawe translates lines 318–19, “Do not let any one of you dine here with sorrow in his heart on that account, since there is no likelihood of that happening whatsoever,” noting, “The translation is influenced by Eurymachos’s echo of these words at 322, but the normal Homeric nuance, by no means absent here, is more one of propriety than probability.”²⁷

In response to Penelope’s words, Eurymachus, another of the suitors, addresses her, saying (322, again in Lattimore’s translation), “we do not think he will take you away. That is not likely (οὐδὲ

ἔοικε).” Again, Dalfen denies that the verb is used impersonally; rather, he believes that Odysseus is the subject. There are no objective means of determining the matter with any certainty. It is, however, the case that the argument used by Penelope and acknowledged by Eurymachus is the same as that used on a number of occasions by characters in Euripidean plays. The argument turns on the acknowledged unsuitability or inappropriateness of a person as spouse, which is used as evidence that an expectation of marriage cannot have been the motivation for an action of that person in the past. The verb ἔοικε, which was also used in the argument from probability in the *Hymn to Hermes*, may not have possessed a connotation of likelihood in Homer’s day, but it did in the fifth century, and Homer’s fifth-century audience, which certainly included the tragedians whose works survive today, would surely have imported that connotation into their understanding of the scene in Book Twenty-One of the *Odyssey*. At any rate, the D scholia include a note on line 319 that indicates that the author of the note took the verb not as meaning, “He is not a fitting husband,” or even as “It is not fitting (for him to marry Penelope),” but as “It is not fitting (for you suitors to consider this).”²⁸ That is, the scholiast understood line 319, and presumably 322 as well, to be referring to the reasoning expected of the speaker’s addressees rather than as a gratuitous observation regarding the suitability of a beggar for marriage to a queen.

I am not suggesting that these lines from the *Odyssey* are in any sense the “source” of Euripides’ several arguments from probability. But the resemblances are so close and the priority of Homer so secure that we ought to demand much more reliable evidence than we currently possess if we are going to convince ourselves that Euripides needed anything more than familiarity with the Homeric poems in order to construct his arguments from probability. Of course, Euripides was familiar with much more than the Homeric poems. Hundreds of tragedies, almost all of which are now lost, were produced in Athens before Euripides began to participate in the tragic competition, and hundreds more by the time he was done. Of them, one or more may have dramatized this very scene from the *Odyssey*. We know, for instance, that Aeschylus produced a play entitled *Penelope*, of which, unfortunately, only a single line survives. In that line (= frag. 187 Radt), Odysseus says, presumably to Penelope, that he is a Cretan of venerable lineage, so it is possible that the contest of the bow formed part of the subject matter of this play. Disguise and the kind of dramatic irony embodied in the Homeric passage we have been considering, in which a wife says unwittingly of her husband that it is absurd to imagine that he would presume to marry her, are

the types of elements frequently encountered in fifth-century tragedy. If Aeschylus dramatized the scene in which the disguised Odysseus asks to be allowed to try the bow, the temptation to adapt the Homeric argument from likelihood would not have been resisted. This is, of course, nothing more than unfounded speculation. But the standard view of the early history of rhetoric is equally based on unfounded speculation, taking as its point of departure the supposed primacy of the argument from probability in the thinking of Tisias.²⁹ We have seen that the argument from probability is already present in Homer and in the “Homeric” *Hymn to Hermes*. But more importantly we have seen that the argument in Homer bears so many resemblances – the use of “rhetorical” questions, a concern with marriage, and reasoning about motivation based on a person’s status – to the Euripidean occurrences that it is much more reasonable to see those occurrences as belonging to a literary, and specifically a poetic, tradition than to a tradition inaugurated by a technical handbook designed to instruct weak men and strong men on the various clever ways to avoid conviction when charged with assault and battery.

One of the features that appears consistently in the tragic instances of the argument from probability is the use of direct questions.³⁰ In the orators as well, we find direct questions in connection with the probability argument, but not with the same regularity.³¹ The reason for this distinction becomes clear when we consider the nature of drama and the nature of forensic oratory. In the latter, the speaker addresses the jury, because it is the aim of the speech to persuade the jurors. There are times, of course, when the speaker turns away, or affects to turn away, from the jury to address someone else, including on occasion the speaker’s opponent in the case (Carawan 1983). But for the most part orators, whether they are delivering forensic, deliberative, or epideictic speeches, address themselves to a mass audience, whereas characters on the stage, particularly those engaged in arguments involving matters of probability, generally direct their words to a single individual, the person against whom they are arguing. After the introduction of the third actor, when it became possible for two characters to argue a matter with each other while a third character serves as judge or arbiter,³² the speaker would address his or her words either to the opponent or to the judge or, occasionally, now to the one and now to the other. So, in Euripides’ *Hecuba*, Polymestor addresses his complaint throughout directly to Agamemnon for judgment (1132–82), while Hecuba, in her defense, begins and ends by addressing Agamemnon (1187–95, 1232–37) but directs the remainder of her words to Polymestor in the second person. Similarly, in *Trojan Women*, Helen defends herself directly to Menelaus as judge (914–65), whereas Hecuba in her reply does not

address Menelaus until the very end of her speech (1029–32), devoting the bulk of her words to a direct address of Helen (971–1028, preceded by only a two-line introduction). This distinction, between a character on stage speaking directly to only one person at a time and an orator addressing an audience measured in the hundreds or even thousands, suggests a reason for why questions are more common in drama than in oratory.

It is, after all, in the nature of things that direct questions are more at home in conversations between two people than in an address to a mass audience. Most questions are asked for the purpose of eliciting an answer, and unless the speaker expects or hopes that a mass audience will be unified in its response – as when the aspirant for public office asks the assembled electorate, “Do you want to pay higher taxes?” – speeches addressed to an audience of more than one are more sparing in the use of direct questions. Evidence for this, if evidence be needed, can be found in the text of Homer. According to the texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* used in the database of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, there are some 468 direct questions in the Homeric poems.³³ Of those, only 59, or 12.6 percent, are directed to more than a single addressee, as when, for example, Calchas and Nestor address direct questions to the Achaean troops (*Iliad* 2.323 and 339).³⁴ Often, when a direct question is addressed to a mass audience, the speaker is not expecting an answer; we are dealing, rather, with a “figure,” with a “rhetorical” question. Of course, the presence of such questions in Homer shows that this “figure” is not dependent on the development of a formal rhetoric.³⁵ Still, the fact that we call such questions “rhetorical” suggests that we tend to think of them as belonging to the rather artificial manner of speaking associated with public oratory. This understanding of the matter goes back to antiquity. When the author of *On the Sublime* discusses this figure of speech, he selects two examples from the orator Demosthenes to explain its efficacy (section 18; Rijksbaron 2003). It will be worth while to quote his discussion of the effect produced by Demosthenes’ rhetorical questions at some length, as it provides a perceptive insight into the workings of the figure (Russell and Winterbottom 1972: 482):

the impassioned rapidity of question and answer and the device of self-objection have made the remark, in virtue of its figurative form, not only more sublime but more credible (πιστότερον). For emotion carries us away more easily when it seems to be generated by the occasion rather than deliberately assumed by the speaker, and the self-directed question and its answer represent (μιμείται) precisely this momentary quality of emotion. Just as people who are unexpectedly plied with questions become annoyed and reply to the point with vigour and exact truth, so the figure of question and

answer arrests the hearer and cheats him into believing that all the points made were raised and are being put into words on the spur of the moment.

It would be difficult to devise a more satisfying explanation of the aim of the *dramatist* when composing dialogue. The very nature of the dramatic form requires the playwright who hopes for success to create exchanges between characters that are, necessarily, worked out in advance but, at the same time, give the appearance of spontaneity. Only thus can the dramatist present a convincing representation of dialogue. And, as Gorgias recognized long before the author of *On the Sublime* composed his treatise, in doing this the playwright is engaged in a sort of deception.

One of the ways in which a dramatist can “cheat” the audience into imagining that the characters on stage are actually engaged in a spontaneous give-and-take, despite the fact that the actors who portray them have memorized and rehearsed their lines well in advance, is by seeding the dialogue with direct questions and prompt answers. [Table 8.1](#) gives some crude but telling statistics, showing the relative frequency of the use of direct questions in a number of fifth- and fourth-century authors. Not surprisingly, the comic dramatist Aristophanes exhibits the highest rate of direct questions; characters in comedy are much less given than their tragic counterparts to expressing themselves in lengthy speeches, so that comic utterances tend to be shorter and are more likely to involve question-and-answer. It is also, perhaps, not surprising that, for the tragedians, the rate increases slightly through time, with Sophocles and Euripides using direct questions more frequently than Aeschylus, an increase that appears to accompany the introduction of the third actor and the expansion of the use of stichomythia (Seidensticker 1971). Nor is it surprising that the dialogues of Plato and the Socratic works of Xenophon should fall within the range of the dramatists in the frequency of direct questions, or that the largely narrative works of Homer and the historians employ direct questions to a much lesser degree. As we can see, the middle ground, between the dramatists and writers of dialogues on the one hand and the epic poet and historians on the other, is occupied by the orators, whose large range in rate of occurrence seems to reflect differences in personal preference and “style.” Interestingly, Gorgias, whom we have seen to be heavily indebted to Aeschylus in other respects, shows a fondness for direct questions comparable to that of his literary predecessor.

Table 8.1 Rate of use of direct questions in select Greek authors.

	Word count	Number of direct questions	Average number of words between question marks
Aristophanes ¹	106,517	2,641	40
Euripides	165,000 ²	3,310	50
Sophocles ¹	63,937	1,195	54
Plato	628,363 ²	10,135	62
Xenophon, Socratica ³	66,249	993	67
Aeschylus ¹	42,920	495	87
Gorgias	7,074	81	87
Demosthenes	308,516 ²	1,872	165
Andocides	18,070	101	179
Lysias	62,828 ²	282	223
Antiphon	19,170	62	309
Isocrates	140,580 ²	387	363
Homer	203,242	468	434
Xenophon, historical works ⁴	126,246	217	582
Herodotus	189,489	128	1,480
Thucydides	153,260	43	3,564

¹Fragments excluded.

²Approximate word counts from Berkowitz (1977).

³Socratica (= *Memorabilia*, *Oeconomicus*, *Symposium*, *Apology*).

⁴Historical works (= *Hellenica*, *Anabasis*).

The question that these figures raise, but cannot on their own answer, is why the orators employ direct questions as frequently as they do, despite the fact that their speeches are addressed to mass audiences. As we have noted, parties to a legal action could interrogate their adversary directly, as for example Lysias interrogates Eratosthenes briefly (Lysias 12.25) and Socrates at greater length interrogates Meletus (Plato, *Apology* 24c–28a; Reid Smith 1995), but these are generally isolated episodes within a speech addressed to the members of the jury. This practice, of directly addressing and interrogating one's opponent, who was required by law to respond, seems to reflect a form of legal procedure that was common at an earlier stage in the development of litigation (Carawan 1983: 210). We see an instance of it in the Furies' interrogation of Orestes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (582–608), although, curiously, much of the interrogation is carried out by means other than through direct questions. For example, the Furies invite Orestes to "tell whether you killed your mother" (587) and insist that "you are required to say how you killed her" (591). And the interrogation concludes with Orestes asking a challenging question ("And am I related by blood to my mother?" 606) to which the Furies reply with two rhetorical questions of their own ("How otherwise did she nurture you inside her womb? Are you forswearing a mother's blood?" 607–8). This is strikingly

different from the procedure visible among the interrogations in the surviving speeches delivered, or purporting to be delivered, in a court of law, in which the interrogation is carried out almost entirely in the form of direct questions.³⁶ While Aeschylus may have attempted to reproduce the *practice* of the contemporary law court in the Furies' interrogation of Orestes, the *form* that the interrogation takes is entirely consistent with the conventions of tragic stichomythia or, as Thomas Rosenmeyer (1982: 201–5) prefers to call it, “shuttle speech.” That is to say, the maintenance of this highly stylized and thoroughly scripted type of verbal exchange depends upon the cooperation of the interlocutors, a cooperation enforced by the conventions of the literary form rather than by legal requirements, as is the case in the court of law.

This is, then, another example of the way in which the drama has evolved, not in response to external influences, but through its natural development as an emerging literary form. Given the basic premise of the dramatic form – that actors must prepare elaborate utterances in verse to be delivered in exchanges with other actors, all of whom are purporting to represent characters who are unaware of what the other characters are prepared to say – Aeschylus and his fellow pioneers in the genre experimented with various measures designed to produce the impression of spontaneity and immediacy. One of those measures, which we explored in Chapter 4 (pp. 60–65), is the Aeschylean trick of keeping a character silent on stage for an extended period. Another is the frequency with which characters ask and answer direct questions. Paradoxically, the purpose of the two techniques is the same, to involve the audience in the theater by arousing anticipation and expectation: The audience awaits the silent character's next utterance, confident that it will be forthcoming, but capable only of speculating as to what its content will be and when the silence will be broken; question-and-answer, like an unfinished sentence or an unresolved musical chord, invites the audience to supply the continuation, which will be confirmed or undermined by what follows from the stage. This is the same purpose served by “rhetorical” questions, as the author of *On the Sublime* recognized. Such questions can be found in Homer, the tragedians, and the orators. The dramatists did not need to learn the technique from the orators, nor am I suggesting that the orators needed to learn it from the dramatists. But the widespread use of it by the orators, as indicated by the frequency revealed in [Table 8.1](#), is likely to have been encouraged by their familiarity with the drama and their appreciation of the contrived spontaneity effected by the question-and-response so engagingly scripted by the tragedians. As is apparent in other respects as well, this familiarity is strongest – perhaps because the experience was so new and arresting – in the case

of Gorgias, who exhibits the highest concentration of direct questions among the orators.

In our discussion of the argument from likelihood, we had occasion to refer to the passage in Homer's *Odyssey* in which Penelope responds to Antinous' proposal that the stranger be barred from attempting to string Odysseus' bow. I should like to return to that passage to examine another feature of that exchange which will, I think, shed further light on the way in which tragedy has opened the way for new forms of argumentation. After Penelope replies to Antinous' speech, asking whether he imagines that the stranger expects to carry her off as his bride should he string the bow, Eurymachus, speaking for the suitors, says that of course they are aware that there is no likelihood of that happening; rather (21.323–29, in Lattimore's 1967 translation),

we are ashamed to face the talk of the men and the women,
for fear some other Achaian, who is meaner than we are,
might say: "Far baser men are courting the wife of a stately 325
man. They are not even able to string his bow. Then
another, some beggar man, came wandering in from
somewhere,
and easily strung the bow, and sent a shaft through the iron."
So they will speak; and that would be a disgrace on all of us.

This technique, in which a character imagines what someone (in Greek, *tis*) will say if a particular course of action is adopted, is fairly frequent in Homer and has been the subject of scholarly attention.³⁷ These types of speeches have come to be called "*tis*-speeches" or, in a compound of Greek and German, "*tis*-Reden," the designation originating, according to John Wilson (1979: 2), in Anton Fingerle's wartime dissertation on Homeric speech types (1939: 283–94), which I have not seen. Wilson distinguishes between "potential *tis*-Reden," like what we see here, and "actual *tis*-Reden," in which the Homeric narrator quotes the words of a typical but unnamed witness to the action of the poem. Examples of the latter follow shortly afterward in Book Twenty-One, when Homer relates what first one then another of the suitors says as he watches the beggar examine the bow of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 21.396–404). This distinction is crucial for, while actual *tis*-Reden are merely part of a narrative strategy for conveying the reactions of characters to the ongoing action of the plot, potential *tis*-Reden, by putting into words a character's concern regarding what someone might say about a projected action, reflect the character's motivation for acting or refraining from acting. So, in the instance quoted just above, Eurymachus is explaining to Penelope why he thinks the beggar ought not to be given an opportunity to string the

bow: If the beggar succeeds, we suitors will be subjected to comments from the general public such as to bring shame on us for being no better than a beggar.

It is characteristic of potential *tis*-Reden in Homer that they serve to provide an explanation of sorts for the speaker's behavior, by articulating the likely praise or blame that the speaker's actions can be expected to invite. So, for example, Hector proposes to Ajax that the two of them discontinue their battle for the time being and exchange gifts (*Iliad* 7.300–2, in Lattimore's 1967 translation):

so that any of the Achaians or Trojans may say of us:
“These two fought each other in heart-consuming hate, then
joined with each other in close friendship, before they were
parted.”

Likewise, in the *Odyssey*, Nausicaa's explanation to Odysseus of why the two of them should not be seen together as they enter the city includes her quotation of the reproachful comments to which she will likely be subjected (6.276–84). Not surprisingly, this sort of *tis*-Rede continues to be found in fifth-century tragedy as well. For example, in Sophocles' *Ajax*, Tecmessa tries to dissuade Ajax from his apparent intention to kill himself by quoting the shameful words that she will have to endure from her new master (500–4). In Euripides' *Children of Heracles*, the young daughter of Heracles explains her willingness to be sacrificed to ensure the success of her siblings by pointing to the shame she would feel when hearing the words, which she quotes, of those who would refuse to allow her, as an exile, into their city (516–19). Her father, in another Euripidean tragedy, justifies his own desire to end his life by quoting the taunts that he will hear should he remain alive after killing his wife and children in a fit of madness (*Heracles* 1286–90). And, in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, the mother of Theseus tries to shame her son into championing the cause of the suppliants by detailing the taunts of cowardice that will be directed against him if he does not do so (314–19).

In tragedy we also find something that is not to be seen in Homer or, as far as I am aware, elsewhere in earlier Greek literature, namely, an anticipation, not of the words of an unnamed, hypothetical individual, but of the very person whom the speaker is addressing. The *tis*-Reden that we have been considering are expressions of normative values, shared by everyone in the society: that cowardice is reprehensible, that exile is unendurable, and so on. They represent judgments on *behavior* that the speaker is proposing for consideration. What is new in fifth-century tragedy is a character's anticipation of *specific arguments* that might be used by the person with whom the character is engaged in debate. We see this, for example, in Euripides'

Hippolytus, when Theseus, having found his wife's body along with a suicide note claiming that her rape at the hands of Hippolytus drove her to kill herself, delivers a speech of accusation against his son. Anticipating potential exculpatory arguments from Hippolytus, Theseus says (962–67, in Kovacs' 1995 translation),

Will you claim that she hated you and that the bastard is always regarded as an enemy to the true-born? You make her a poor merchant of her own life, then, if she destroyed what was most precious to herself for enmity of you. But will you say that folly is not to be found in men but is native to women? ...

Theseus here lays out two possible lines of defense, which he refutes even before Hippolytus has been given a chance to use them. Later, in his speech defending himself against an accusation that we know to be false, Hippolytus uses a similar technique. After categorically denying the charge, which he acknowledges is not likely to persuade his father in the face of apparently conclusive proof of his guilt, Hippolytus challenges Theseus (1008–11):

You ought then to show how I was corrupted.³⁸ Did her body surpass all other women's in beauty? Or did I hope that by taking an heiress as mistress I would succeed to your house?

Aside from his faulty logic – according to his reasoning, every rapist who can produce a more beautiful woman than the victim can thereby secure acquittal – Hippolytus does not help his cause by suggesting to the bereaved Theseus that his wife was not all that good-looking. Be that as it may, his manner of argumentation mirrors that of his accuser, by proposing possible arguments against his own position and showing, or intimating, that they are not valid (M. Lloyd 1992: 49).

This technique of anticipation is not confined to scenes of debate or speeches of accusation and defense. In Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, Adrastus tries to persuade the young Theseus to help ensure that the bodies of the seven who died attacking Thebes be accorded proper burial. He knows that his request is likely to meet with resistance, and so he anticipates Theseus' objection, saying (184–88, in Kovacs' 1998 translation),

Perhaps you might object, "Why do you pass over the Peloponnesus and lay this task on Athens?" It is my duty to explain this. Sparta is savage and devious in its ways, and the other states are small and weak.

Christopher Collard's commentary on this passage (1975a, vol. 2: 156–57) is typical of the way in which scholars treat "rhetorical" elements in Euripides and elsewhere in Greek tragedy. He begins by noting that later rhetoricians have applied the Greek term *prokatalipsis* (Latin

anticipatio) to this device, citing “Arist. Rh. Al. 1432b11,”³⁹ and commenting that the device “is natural in any argument and occurs already in Homer.” I have learned to be suspicious of any statement claiming that something is “natural,” ever since I read Arthur Sidgwick’s confident assertion that the principle for determining the order of words in a sentence of ancient Greek is that they follow “the *natural* order” (1908: 100, with Sidgwick’s dogmatic italics). Collard cites two alleged Homeric instances, *Iliad* 6.459, which is a typical Homeric potential *tis*-Rede, and *Odyssey* 7.275, a misprint for 6.275, Nausicaa’s *tis*-Rede mentioned earlier. Some of the parallels from tragedy that Collard cites (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 756; Sophocles, *Ajax* 504; Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 314) also are potential *tis*-Reden. There is, however, an important distinction between projecting the platitudinous judgment of an anonymous observer, which does not fall under the definition of *prokatalepsis* given by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, and the anticipation of a reasoned argument that may be detrimental to one’s case (M. Lloyd 1992: 30 n. 45). The former we find in authors from Homer on; the latter is not attested before the fifth century BC.

What, then, is the origin of this technique of anticipating and preemptively answering possible objections to one’s own position? The usual view, of course, is that, since it is a “rhetorical” device, it is therefore likely to have originated with the pioneers of rhetorical theory and practice, from whom dramatists like Sophocles and Euripides would have learned it. Both Collard (1975a) and Michael Lloyd (1992: 31) note Adrastus’ use of the word “perhaps” in introducing the projected objection, a word that is often found in this context in the speeches of the Attic orators (Cooper 1971: 14–15, with n. 3). The assumption seems to be that this is evidence that Euripides is imitating the practice of speakers in contemporary law courts. Both Collard and Lloyd cite Eduard Fraenkel (1957: 55), according to whom this passage in Euripides represents the earliest occurrence of this “formula of public speeches.” Fraenkel too shares the assumption that it is merely an accident of survival that our earliest evidence comes from the drama rather than from oratory, as is clear from his reference to his own commentary on line 1393 of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* (1950, vol. 3: 656), where he says, “We can hardly doubt that this formula of transition [ὥς ὅδ’ ἐχόντων] was used in the same way in public speeches of the time of Aeschylus.” Anything, apparently, that is common in the orators but is first attested in the tragedians must have been adopted by the latter from the former, whose earliest works, which would have provided the confirmatory evidence, have unfortunately not survived. Scholars are ready to believe that that is the case when it comes to the argument from

likelihood, since there is explicit ancient testimony that it was an invention of the Sicilian rhetoricians. We have seen, however, that the ancient testimony is questionable, and we have noted instances of the argument from likelihood in poetry from before the fifth century. Why, then, should we believe, in a case where there is no explicit testimony, that a given feature first attested in tragedy was derived from elsewhere?

In fact, when it is a matter of a technique in which a speaker anticipates potential counterarguments, the most likely point of origin surely is an environment in which the same person is put in the position of having to compose arguments both for and against a given position. This environment is inevitable in the creation of the drama; it is not normally the case in the context of forensic or deliberative oratory that speeches on both sides of an issue are produced by one and the same person. Of course, Protagoras is said to have taught his pupils to argue both sides of an issue (test. 20 and 21 Diels-Kranz) and the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon present instances from the late fifth century of precisely that type of exercise. But Euripides did not need to be taught how to put opposing arguments into the mouths of speakers. Or, rather, if he needed to be taught, his instructors were his predecessors in the art of composing tragedy, who had been required, since the time the genre was invented, to provide persuasive arguments for antagonistic characters to speak.⁴⁰ It was necessary for the dramatist to anticipate the arguments to be used by the second of two speakers, because he was required to devise those arguments himself and, in the days when dramatists acted in their own plays, might himself be expected to deliver those arguments in performance. Indeed, one can readily imagine the playwright at work, constructing arguments to put into the mouth of his character, only to think of convincing, or at least plausible, counterarguments. Not wanting to discard those arguments as invalid and not, perhaps, wishing a sympathetic character to be refuted, the playwright discovered that he could put those arguments to good use by having the same character first raise them and then point out their inadequacy. In the case of the two passages noted here from *Hippolytus*, Euripides was able to take further advantage of this technique for his dramatic purposes. By suggesting and rejecting hatred of Hippolytus as a possible motive for Phaedra's incriminating suicide note, Theseus unwittingly touches upon the irony that it was precisely her erotic passion for Hippolytus that brought this unfortunate situation about. And by having Hippolytus dismiss Phaedra's beauty as a possible motive for rape, Euripides enhances his characterization of Hippolytus as a young man who is perilously insensitive to sexual attractiveness.

There is, of course, no way of proving that this figure of

anticipation originated among the dramatists rather than in the law courts or the Assembly. My concern has been merely to show that the circumstances of composing plays are more likely to have been conducive to its discovery. And, as it happens, our earliest evidence for the phenomenon is to be found in the works of Sophocles and Euripides.⁴¹ We see it also used extensively by Gorgias, in his *Defense of Palamedes*, where, according to John Dewar Denniston, he “rides it to death.”⁴² But this instance is instructive in two regards. In the first place, since it is a speech for the defense there ought to be no need for Palamedes to anticipate the arguments used by the prosecution, as it is necessary for the accuser to lay out the case against the accused before the latter can begin to defend himself. The large number of anticipations can be explained only by the fact that this speech stands on its own. It was not actually delivered in a court of law in answer to a speech for the prosecution; rather, it is a fictitious defense concocted for a mythical defendant. And this is the second reason that this work of Gorgias is instructive. Like his *Encomium of Helen*, and like Prodicus’ *Heracles at the Crossroads* (frag. 2 Diels–Kranz) – these three works representing three of the earliest, perhaps the three earliest, surviving examples of Greek oratory – it is a display piece that concerns itself with a character from the legendary past. Palamedes, Helen, and Heracles are all characters who appeared frequently on the Attic stage. The Athenian dramatists had been composing speeches for and about them since the earliest years of the fifth century. It is interesting and perhaps significant that when Gorgias and Prodicus, the former of whom was, as we have seen, conspicuously influenced by the works of Aeschylus, produced display pieces in prose to show off their persuasive skills, they chose to imitate the practice of the Athenian dramatists by impersonating figures familiar from myth. In contrast to the Athenian Antiphon, whose *Tetralogies* also are speeches for fictitious cases but which presuppose the circumstances of the Attic courtroom, the non-Athenians Gorgias and Prodicus confine themselves to generalities that would be appropriate in any setting. Further, they composed their speeches in the Attic dialect, the dialect of the spoken portion of Greek drama, despite the fact that both men were natives of Ionic-speaking cities, Gorgias from Leontini in Sicily and Prodicus from Ioulis on the island of Ceos.⁴³ Gorgias and Prodicus had more to learn from the poets of Attic tragedy than they could teach the dramatists. This is apparently the reason that references to poets in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* far outnumber those to orators (Gagarin 1997: 2) and why the third-century sophist Nicagoras referred to tragedy as “the mother of sophists,”⁴⁴ an expression that provides the title and the premise for Carla Castelli’s 2000 book, which catalogues in detail the extensive use made of the texts of the

tragedians by rhetorical theorists from the fourth century BC to the Byzantine Period to supply examples of the various figures that aspiring orators needed to master.

¹ Lloyd does not mention in this connection (but he does on pp. 29, 50, and 103–5) what may in fact be the earliest Euripidean example, frag. 472e.6–9 Kannicht, from *Cretans*; see this chapter, pp. 165–66. For the probable date of *Cretans* (sometime between 455 and 428 BC), see Cropp and Fick (1985: 70, 82).

² Shortly before this, anticipating the definition that he is about to formulate, Aristotle uses an unambiguously visual term when he says (1355b10–11) that the function of rhetoric “is not to persuade but to see (ἰδεῖν) what is in every instance available as a means of persuasion.”

³ See des Places (1964, vol. 1: 252) for Plato and Bonitz (1870: 328) for Aristotle. For *theoria* in Aristotle, see the extended treatment in Nightingale (2004: 187–252).

⁴ Garvie (1969: 1–28) argued in detail for a date in the 460s, perhaps (11) specifically 463, and Scullion (2002: 87–101) for the mid- to late 470s. In the second edition of his 1969 book, Garvie acknowledges that “the year 470 cannot be ruled out” (2006: x).

⁵ *Rhetoric* 1403b26. This may have been the same Glaucon whom Aristotle quotes elsewhere, presumably from a written treatise (*Poetics* 1461b1–3), and to whom Plato refers (*Ion* 530d) in the company of some others known to have written on Homer: Lanata (1963: 280–81).

⁶ Plato refers sarcastically to Thrasymachus and, apparently, to this treatise of his at *Phaedrus* 267c–d. Aristotle’s attitude toward delivery owes a good deal to the views of his mentor Plato (Fortenbaugh 1986).

⁷ Later in the play, after the Argive king has explained that it will be necessary for Danaus to accompany him into the city to seek approval from the people, the king tells Danaus’ daughters, “I will instruct your father in what manner he should speak” (519, in Friis Johansen’s translation). For “instruct” he uses the verb (διδάξω) that is later attested as the standard way of referring to a tragic poet “producing” his plays (Herodotus 6.21.2; Aristophanes,

⁸ The concept of “the becoming” (τὸ πρέπον) figures prominently in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1408a9–b20) and *Poetics* (1455a25, 1456a14, 1459a4); for the concept generally, see Pohlenz (1933).

⁹ For example, Goff (1990: 53, 78–104), M. Lloyd (1992: 20–21, 34–35), Scodel (1999–2000), and Karamanou (2006: 86). Interestingly, Karamanou is prompted to refer to the “speaker’s rhetorical self-consciousness” by the use of the word τεκμήριον, “evidentiary fact,” in Euripides frag. 322.3 Kannicht, which use Karamanou considers “a Sicilian device, perhaps introduced in Athenian rhetoric by Protagoras.” Protagoras was not Sicilian, and this use is in fact first attested in Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women* (54, 271; also *Agamemnon* 352, *Eumenides* 447, 485, 662).

¹⁰ Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980, vol. 2: 353, in reference to *Suppliant Women* 446, citing 10 further instances in tragedy and only one from prose (a saying attributed to one of the Seven Wise Men).

¹¹ See Untersteiner (1954: 176–84, 194–205), Kennedy (1963: 66–68), Trédé (1992: 247–55), and Jennings (2007: 335–39).

¹² The attribution of self-consciousness to rhetorical *theory* can only be postulated, since we have no rhetorical theory earlier than the supposed examples of it in practice. M. Lloyd (1992: 21) and Hutchinson (1985: 42) have to make do with references to Antiphon, and Hubbard (2007: 491) finds “speakers engaged in self-conscious linguistic and discursive strategies” in fifth-century comedy, but how can we know that Antiphon’s or Aristophanes’ practice is the product of theory rather than imitations of others’ practice (Timmerman, Schiappa, and Major 2010)? And if the latter, why not imitations of the practice of the tragedians, the most visible and influential cultural figures in fifth-century Athens?

¹³ For the pervasiveness of ring composition in the earliest surviving tragedy, Aeschylus’ *Persians*, see Holtsmark (1970).

¹⁴ See Kuebler (1944), Goebel (1983: 84–170, 1989b), Gagarin (1994), and Spatharas (2001), all with earlier bibliography.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1402a17–20, translated by Kennedy (1991: 188–89), with Kennedy’s italics and his interpretative insertions in square brackets. According to Goebel (1983: 84) these two brief notices in Plato and Aristotle “represent in fact practically the whole of our reliable testimony about the doctrines of Corax and Tisias.” I question only the characterization of the testimony as “reliable.”

¹⁶ If Kennedy’s insertion, “that a weak man would attack another,” is correct, the first scenario too is concerned with intentions, but I think it more likely that what is at issue here is an argument about the likelihood of the assault actually having taken place, as in Plato’s version.

¹⁷ Goebel 1983: 2–3. There is, however, little place for likelihood in a trial in which there is no dispute regarding either the defendant’s having done the deed of which he is accused or his motivation (*Eumenides* 588–96). Goebel (73) and M. Lloyd (1992: 22) further point to the contrast between Antiphon, for whom the argument from probability is central, and Aeschylus. It should be noted, however, that only six (or, with *Prometheus Bound*, seven) of Aeschylus’ plays survive, and we have more than seven plays of Euripides from which the argument from probability is absent, so that the absence of the argument from probability in Aeschylus could just as well be an accident of transmission.

¹⁸ See Easterling (1982: 19–23), noting (19) that the question of the play’s date “is one of the most notorious problems in Sophoclean scholarship.” Vickers (1995), however, would date the play to as late as 425/4 BC, and Mitchell-Boyask (2008: 67–104) to the early 420s.

¹⁹ Because of the frequency of references to plague, the play is often dated to the years immediately following the devastating outbreak of plague in Athens in 430 BC. See most recently Mitchell-Boyask (2008: 56–66), arguing that the play’s reminders of the recent affliction contributed to its failure to win first prize. My own view is that Sophocles would have been likely to anticipate such a reaction and that, therefore, the play must belong to the period before 430.

²⁰ See Brown (1987: 1–2) for the standard view that the play dates to the late 440s. Lewis (1988) argues for the year 438.

²¹ For the form of the argument used here by Andromache, see Goebel (1989a). Mastronarde (1979: 6–18) provides a typology of rhetorical questions.

²² So Spatharas (2001) and Tindale (2010: 69–71). For Plato’s disdain for probability, see *Phaedrus* 229d–e (referring to Gorgons, with whom Plato playfully connects Gorgias’ name at *Symposium* 198c), 266e–67a, 272d–73a, and 273d–e; and Solmsen (1929: 135–43). Seeskin (1982: 99) pertinently emphasizes that Plato represents Socrates as *not* using the argument from probability at his trial.

²³ All figures are derived from the online *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG; www.tlg.uci.edu).

²⁴ *Poetics* 1451a36–b1, from the translation in Else (1957: 407), with Else’s emphasis.

²⁵ This is true, of course, even for playwrights, like Shakespeare, who were “educated not in the tradition of Aristotle’s *Poetics* but in the rhetorical poetics of Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian” (Altman 2010: 14).

²⁶ *Electra* most likely dates from sometime between 422 and 417 BC: Cropp (1988: l–li).

²⁷ Dawe (1993: 770). The “normal Homeric nuance” is well illustrated by *Iliad* 12.212, where the same expression (οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδὲ ἔοικε) appears in a context that unambiguously refers to propriety.

²⁸ οὐδὲ ἔοικε] τοῦτο ὅμως ἐννοεῖν. For the character and antiquity of the D scholia, see Dickey (2007: 20–23).

²⁹ “Unfortunately, probability is the only element of Tisias’ theory that we know anything at all about” (Goebel 1983: 359).

³⁰ Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 592–93, 599, and *Antigone* 284–88; and Euripides, *Hecuba* 1201–5, *Trojan Women* 976–81, *Hippolytus* 958–67, 1009–11, *Andromache* 192–204, 938–39, *Electra* 527–29, 534–35, and *Cretans* frag. 472e.11–20.

³¹ Direct questions in Antiphon at 2.1.5, 2.2.6–7, 5.27–28, 44,

and 50, but not at, for example, 2.3.5, 2.3.8, 2.4.8–10, and 4.3.2.

³² For a typology along these lines of the *agones* of Euripides, see Dubischar (2001: 58–59, 66–70).

³³ Here and below, the exact figures should be used with great caution. The search capability of the TLG (www.tlg.uci.edu) was used to find occurrences of question marks in the text, and no two editors will agree on matters of punctuation (Sansone 1990). In the matter of word counts for authors also, we must recognize that they can only be rough estimates. For the most part, I have relied on the figures given by the TLG. Even with these reservations, the results given below based on these figures are clear and compelling.

³⁴ On eight occasions (*Iliad* 1.8, 5.704, 8.273, 11.300, 16.693, 17.261, 22.204, *Odyssey* 22.14) direct questions are asked, not by characters in the poem but by Homer himself. In one of those instances (*Iliad* 16.693) Homer addresses Patroclus; for the rest I assume that these questions are directed to the (singular) Muse addressed in the first line of each poem or the (collective) Muses addressed occasionally elsewhere (de Jong 1987a: 47–51; Lang 1984: 38–39; S. Richardson 1990: 178–82). Of the 59 questions addressed to an audience of more than one, nine are addressed to pairs of listeners, either humans, gods, or (*Iliad* 17.444, 445, 450, 23.409) horses.

³⁵ Many of Homer's questions directed at single addressees as well as to mass audiences are “rhetorical” questions; Larrain (1987: 223–24). For an excellent comparison between Homer's and Herodotus' use of rhetorical questions, see Lang (1984: 37–51). Naturally, such questions are frequent in the orators; for example, for Isaeus, see Denommé (1974: 62, 101–4, 138–44).

³⁶ See Andocides 1.101; Lysias 12.25, 22.5; Plato, *Apology* 24c–28a; and Dinarchus 1.83.

³⁷ Hentze (1905), J.R. Wilson (1979), de Jong (1987b), and Schneider (1996).

³⁸ The alliterative wording in line 1008 (δεῖ δὴ σε δεῖξαι) seems to have influenced Gorgias, whose *Encomium of Helen* includes the expression δεῖ δὲ καὶ δόξῃ δεῖξαι (9).

³⁹ This is a fourth-century rhetorical treatise preserved among the works of Aristotle, prefaced by a dedicatory epistle purportedly from Aristotle to Alexander the Great, who was at one time Aristotle's pupil (Chiron 2007). The work is therefore known as the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*; English translations are available by E.S. Forster in Ross 1924 and by D.C. Mirhady in Mayhew and Mirhady (2011: 460–641). Discussion of “anticipation” extends from 1432b11 to 1433b16 (= Chapter 18 in Ross 1924, the pages of which are unnumbered).

⁴⁰ Compare the contrast that Plato draws (*Laws* 719c–d) between the unequivocal language required of the lawgiver and the practice of the poets, who are compelled to create characters who say contradictory things. In view of Plato's hostility toward rhetoric, one might have expected a contrast rather with sophists like Protagoras.

⁴¹ For examples in addition to the passages already mentioned (*Hippolytus* 962–67 and 1008–11, and *Suppliant Women* 184–88), see Sophocles, *Electra* 534–41, and *Oedipus at Colonus* 431–33; and Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 543–48, *Andromache* 192–204, *Hecuba* 258–63, 1201–5, *Ion* 629–31, *Heracles* 295–300, *Trojan Women* 938–40, 951–55, *Orestes* 665, *Phoenician Women* 559–67, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1185–91.

⁴² Denniston (1954: 11). It is curious that Gorgias bases so much of the case in this model speech on the argument from likelihood when he and everyone in his audience would know that Palamedes' defense was ultimately unsuccessful. There seem to be two possible explanations: Either Gorgias was prepared to argue that his own rhetorical skills were so great that *he* could have secured Palamedes' acquittal or he would tell his pupils how Odysseus, if he was clever, could have counteracted Palamedes' seemingly conclusive arguments. In either case, Gorgias would have imparted the crucial information *in propria persona*, outside the text of the speech itself, either in a written treatise or, more likely, via oral instruction, undoubtedly for a substantial fee.

⁴³ For Gorgias, see Willi (2008: 301–3). In what is perhaps a parallel phenomenon, Taplin (2007: 42) points out that, surprisingly, labels on fourth-century vases related to Attic tragedy that were produced in non-Attic-speaking cities of the Greek West are written, for the most part, in the Attic dialect.

⁴⁴ Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.27. For Nicagoras, see M. Heath (1996: 67). Philostratus goes on to say that Hippodromus of Larissa capped Nicagoras' remark by calling Homer the sophists' father. For the common ancient view of Homer as the father of rhetoric, see Cairns (1972: 34–40).

Putting the Accuser on Trial

In Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, after first addressing the longstanding defamation to which he has been subjected (19a–24b), Socrates turns to the current charges that have been brought against him by Meletus. He first quotes the sworn indictment (“Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and of not recognizing the gods recognized by the community, instead recognizing other, new divine entities”) and then proceeds to scrutinize one by one each of the terms of the claim filed against him. Socrates does this by interrogating Meletus (24c–28a) in a manner that modern commentators generally regard as deficient in relevancy and even in seriousness (Danzig 2003: 299). For example, John Burnet (1924: 106, on 24c9) says, “Socrates does not condescend to use serious arguments against Meletus” and, according to Emile De Strycker and Simon Slings (1994: 125), the interrogation of Meletus represents little more than “a comic intermezzo between two serious sections.”¹ In particular, in the course of the questioning, Socrates manages to secure Meletus’ assent to two absurd propositions, first, that every Athenian, with only one exception, namely, Socrates, improves the city’s youth (25a); and, second, that Socrates both believes in gods and does not believe in gods (27a). It should be borne in mind that there is no necessary incompatibility between a “comic” element in a courtroom speech and serious intent.² Still, the absurdity of the procedure is magnified by the fact that the author is Plato, whose works are filled with denigration of the sophists and of the cheap tricks they employ to win arguments rather than pursue the truth. And, if Plato had wanted a comic intermezzo, why did he compose it precisely in the form of a dialogue, placing it between two stretches of continuous speech, when he regarded dialogue as the only serious form of discourse?

It is, of course, common practice for defendants in Athenian courtrooms to go on the offensive and attack the character and the motives of those who have brought charges against them. This tactic is well illustrated by a passage in another of Plato’s works. The *Euthyphro* is a dialogue in which Socrates encounters Euthyphro on

the day of his preliminary hearing for the trial at which the *Apology* will supposedly be delivered. Euthyphro considers himself to be an expert in matters of religion and, since the charges against Socrates involve religious offenses, Socrates suggests that he enroll as a pupil of Euthyphro's, and he requests Euthyphro's permission to propose that charges be brought against Euthyphro instead of himself. Euthyphro, who is confident that Socrates does not deserve prosecution on religious grounds, is happy to grant the request, saying, "If Meletus should attempt to bring charges against me, Socrates, you can be sure I would find out where he was vulnerable, by Zeus, and the topic of discussion in the courtroom would much sooner be about him than about me" (5b–c). Not surprisingly, there are many examples of the use of this tactic in the surviving speeches from the fifth and fourth centuries, and we will examine some of them in this chapter. But it is interesting to note that already in the time of Gorgias the tactic must have been widely recognized. For Gorgias represents Palamedes, in defending himself against Odysseus, as making a point of refraining from using this tactic (Süss 1910: 56), saying, "Although I could defend myself by charging you with many great offenses, both old and new, I do not wish to do so; for I wish to be acquitted of this charge not because of your vices but because of my own virtues" (27). As it happens, both Plato and Xenophon represent Socrates at his trial as comparing his own fate with that of Palamedes, who was also unjustly condemned to death.³ And many scholars have noted the substantial similarities between Plato's *Apology* and Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*, which seem to show that Gorgias' work was very much on Plato's mind when he composed his *Apology*.⁴ Some, like Feaver and Hare (1981) and Seeskin (1982), have even gone so far as to see a parodic intent on Plato's part. But if Plato is parodying Gorgias, why would he have Socrates engage in an attack on his accuser when even the unsavory sophist whose work is being parodied had already represented Palamedes as finding that kind of behavior beneath him? I am not aware that anyone has sought to argue that, on the contrary, the reason for the similarities between Plato's *Apology* and Gorgias' *Defense* is that the latter is responding to the former.⁵ If one were inclined to make that argument, Palamedes' repudiation of a tactic deployed with such evident gusto by Plato's Socrates might prove a useful support.

I am, however, unable to persuade myself that there is any likelihood that the *Defense of Palamedes* is later than Plato's *Apology*, and the problem remains of why Socrates spends so much time making a public display of his opponent's moral and intellectual deficiencies. And "display" is the proper term to use in this connection, for it is the word Socrates himself uses just before he

summons Meletus before the jury to respond to his questions. Socrates tells the jurors that he will attempt to display (ἐπιδείξαι, 24c, also 25c) that his accuser is only pretending to be seriously concerned with matters that, in fact, he has never cared about. “Display” is the word that is frequently used to describe the verbal performances of sophists and rhetoricians, performances about which Plato’s Socrates regularly registers suspicions (Thomas 2000: 255–57). Gorgias expresses himself in just this way in both of his surviving speeches. In the *Encomium of Helen* he says that he wishes to remove the blame that has attached to Helen by displaying (ἐπιδείξας, 2) that her detractors are lying. Similarly, Palamedes says that he will show (ἐπιδείξω, *Defense of Palamedes* 5) in more than one way that Odysseus is not telling the truth when he accuses Palamedes of treason. Plato, then, in constructing the interrogation of Meletus is clearly representing Socrates as using techniques recognizably associated with the sophists, and this has justifiably made modern commentators uncomfortable.⁶ For the arguments used by Socrates do not in any formal sense address the issue of his guilt or innocence with regard to the specific charges; instead, Socrates uses what appears to be verbal sleight-of-hand to show that Meletus is merely an intellectual lightweight who cannot be taken seriously. From a strictly legal and logical point of view, the interrogation of Meletus is irrelevant to the establishment of Socrates’ innocence. After all, it is perfectly reasonable to imagine that charges may be brought against a genuinely guilty person by an incompetent or a morally depraved individual. The question of Meletus’ character ought, therefore, to have no bearing on the validity of the charges contained in the indictment of Socrates. And yet, as is now widely recognized, Plato’s Socrates employs very many of the standard rhetorical commonplaces in his speech for the defense, notwithstanding his initial protestation – itself a standard rhetorical commonplace – that he is a stranger to the ways and the words of the law courts.⁷ Naturally, Socrates is represented as using these commonplaces in his own manner and for his own purposes, a manner and purposes that often differ considerably from those of more conventional orators. Before we can hope to understand those purposes, however, it will be necessary to examine the conventions that Plato is adapting.

Again, Socrates introduces his interrogation of Meletus by proposing to defend himself (ἀπολογεῖσθαι, 24b) by means of a display of Meletus’ guilt (ἀδικεῖν, 24c), inasmuch as his accuser plays around with something that is no laughing matter, pretending to be seriously concerned with matters that, in fact, he has never cared about. Of course, Socrates knows full well, as does everyone else in the court, that Meletus is dead serious, and it is Socrates who turns the

proceedings into a laughing matter, by showing up Meletus to be ridiculous. In doing this, Socrates is using a standard rhetorical technique, a technique that won the approval of Aristotle, who commends Gorgias' statement that one should demolish one's opponents' seriousness with a witticism and their witticisms with seriousness.⁸ One way in which Socrates makes Meletus to appear ridiculous is by leading him through a series of questions that results in Meletus' admission that Socrates is both guilty of recognizing new divine entities and that he is a complete atheist. The purpose of this line of argument, however, is not, or not merely, to make a fool of Meletus. It serves, in fact, as a serious, if subtle, refutation of some of the "earlier charges," that Socrates had represented as being even more dangerous than the charges brought now by Meletus, because they affected the jurors when they were young (18b; cf. 28a), charges that are embodied in the caricature of Socrates presented in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (18d, 19c). As Lynette Reid Smith (1995: 386–87) has noted, Meletus is merely being asked here to articulate the inconsistency in, and therefore to call into question, the influential portrait drawn in *Clouds* by Aristophanes, who represents Socrates as both not believing in gods (247–48; cf. 367) and as recognizing the divinity of such entities as Clouds, Vapor, Ether, Vortex, Chasm, Discourse, and Spiration (252–53, 264–66, 365, 380–81, 423–24, 627). The same incoherence, as Reid Smith points out, can be found in Aristophanes' representation of Euripides, who is accused of persuading the citizens of Athens that there are no gods (*Thesmophoriazusae* 450–51) while at the same time worshiping other, new divine entities, including Ether, Linguiflexure, Acumen, and Olfaction (*Frogs* 889–94). That is, the most damaging charges brought against Socrates are those that are brought against the sophists and other trendy intellectuals, who are generally considered not to believe in the gods (18a). Since those charges are themselves incoherent, the exposure of their incoherence constitutes a perfectly reasonable defense. Of course, a reasonable defense is effective only before a jury of reasonable people, and it is not necessarily Plato's view that a jury of Athenian citizens, which is broadly representative of the Athenian citizen population in general, can be expected to be reasonable. Or rather, as Plato's Socrates points out on more than one occasion, it would take much more time than the half-hour or so allotted to him in order to initiate the members of the jury into the society of the enlightened.⁹

The other way in which Socrates attempts to display Meletus' "guilt" (24c), by bringing him to the point of affirming that everyone in Athens except Socrates improves the city's young men, will require a more detailed examination. First, however, it will be worth pointing

out some interesting features that this section of Plato's *Apology* shares with a scene in the *Clouds*. It will be remembered (from Chapter 7, p. 121) that Aristophanes represents Socrates as maintaining in his school a pair of Modes of Discourse, The Better and The Worse, and that these are brought onto the stage, where they engage in a debate, the focus of which is the education of young men (Dover 1968: lviii). Each of the two Modes of Discourse attempts to persuade the young Pheidippides to adopt his methods and values. Pheidippides' father had enrolled him in Socrates' school in order that the young man might learn both Modes or, failing that, by all means The Worse, since it has the ability to overthrow The Better by using unjust arguments (*Clouds* 112–18, 244–45, 882–85). And, indeed, The Worse Mode of Discourse does defeat The Better in the course of the ensuing debate. In a certain sense The Worse Mode of Discourse is Socrates, as he takes over for Socrates in “educating” Pheidippides. If the surviving text of *Clouds* represents a version of the play that was actually performed in the theater, the actor who played Socrates must also have played The Worse Mode of Discourse. This would have required “a costume change of lightning swiftness” unparalleled in the ancient theater (Sommerstein 2009: 180), but if Aristophanes was not concerned to ensure that the identities of Socrates and The Worse Mode of Discourse remain distinct, such a lighting change may well have taken place, even – to bring the point home in dramatic fashion – in full view of the audience. In any event, Plato has Socrates remind the jury of these Modes of Discourse in the *Apology*, when Socrates defends himself against the “earlier charges,” naming Aristophanes as their representative (19c). In the “indictment” that Socrates puts into the mouth of these earlier accusers he is charged, among other things, with “being guilty of making The Worse Mode of Discourse The Better” (19b), that is, of using unjust arguments to overthrow morally acceptable positions, just as the approved Mode of Discourse is capable of doing in Aristophanes' comedy (*Clouds* 883–84, 1041–42).

In the *Apology* Socrates ironically follows the script provided for him by Aristophanes. According to that script, The Better Mode of Discourse accuses The Worse of impairing the young men of Athens (916–17, 927–28). After the chorus invite the two Modes to settle the matter by having each give a display (ἐπίδειξαι, 935) of their systems of education, The Worse Mode agrees to let The Better speak first (940–41), putting himself essentially in the position of defendant in a trial. When his time comes to defend himself, The Worse Mode goes on the offensive and undertakes an interrogation of The Better (1045–1104). The conclusion of this interrogation bears a striking resemblance to that portion of Socrates' interrogation of Meletus in which the latter is brought progressively to include an increasing

number of Athenian citizens in a particular category. Socrates begins by asking Meletus to tell the members of the jury, since Meletus has obviously given a great deal of thought to the subject of education, who it is that improves the young (24d). Meletus is initially silent, but is shamed by Socrates into replying, but his first response, “The laws,” does not address the question of *who* it is that improves the young. In keeping with the civic-minded persona that he has adopted, and in order to flatter those who will decide the case, Meletus then says that it is the members of the jury who educate the young and make them better (24e). In response to further questioning from Socrates, Meletus says that all the members of the jury and not just some of them improve the young, and then progressively includes in the number of those who educate Athens’ youth the audience at the trial, the members of the Council of 500 and the members of the Assembly. And, since membership in the Assembly was open to all adult male citizens, Meletus is finally brought to the admission that all Athenian citizens – with, of course, the exception of Socrates – improve the young of the city (25a).

The interrogation of The Better Mode of Discourse by The Worse in *Clouds* had followed the same course, although, as is appropriate to the manner of Old Comedy, the language is, of course, coarse. The Better Mode suggests that, if Pheidippides pursues the program of study advocated by The Worse, he will likely be subjected to the punishment traditionally inflicted on the dissolute (1083–84), namely, the gross indignity of having a radish forcibly inserted into his anus, rendering him indistinguishable from the most despised members of society, namely, The Reamed (εὐρύπρωκτοι), those who willingly submit to anal intercourse. Worse outrageously proposes to prove to Better that Pheidippides will be no worse off by joining the ranks of The Reamed, and Better agrees that, if Worse is successful in proving so scandalous a proposition, he will acknowledge defeat (1085–88). The interrogation proceeds with Worse asking Better from what class of people professional forensic speakers are drawn, to which Better replies, “From The Reamed.” He gives the same reply, successively, to questions about tragedians, politicians and, finally, the audience in the theater, of which he claims the overwhelming majority belong to the class of The Reamed (1089–98). At this point, Better admits defeat and the education of Pheidippides is entrusted to The Worse Mode of Discourse.

The ironies of basing the interrogation of Meletus on the model of the debate in *Clouds* are manifold and are exquisitely managed by Plato. Meletus is shown to be every bit as ridiculous in his unrestrained flattery of his audience as Better is in expressing the view that virtually everyone in his audience is irredeemably depraved. Even

though no sensible person can believe either Meletus' or Better's view of the Athenian population, the same citizens who could be counted on to laugh at the absurdity of the conclusion to Aristophanes' debate were apparently willing to conclude, despite the absurdity of Meletus' responses, that Socrates was guilty of impairing the youth of Athens. By convicting Socrates, the citizens of the jury, or at least a majority of them, were inviting a reputation for moral debasement that the majority of them already possessed, according to the assumptions that underlie the debate between the two Modes of Discourse. The very failure of Socrates' defense, in the sense that it did not secure an acquittal, requires that Better's view of the population of Athens be closer to the truth than Meletus'.¹⁰ By having Socrates reenact his role as The Worse Mode of Discourse, where "worse" in Greek is the same word as "weaker, less effective," his very failure to secure acquittal can be represented as a refutation of the charge that he is guilty of making The Worse Mode of Discourse The Better, where "better" in Greek is the same word as "stronger, more effective." After Socrates has played out his comic role, he turns the tables on Meletus and accuses his accuser of having turned the indictment into a comedy (ἐπικωμῶδῶν, 31d). The final irony, perhaps, is that *Clouds* was itself a failure with its original audience, coming in third in the voting among the three plays performed at the Dionysia in 423 BC (Dover 1968: lxxx), and yet Plato goes out of his way to attribute the conviction of Socrates in large measure to the success of the slanderous caricature of Socrates in that comic play (*Apology* 18b–19c, 28a).

But Plato goes even farther than Aristophanes, for Better admits only that the overwhelming majority of Athenians are depraved, while Meletus is convinced that the majority of Athenians who improve the young so far outnumber the minority who corrupt them that there is only a single person in the latter class. The outrageousness of this claim is an embarrassment to those commentators who wish to believe that the interrogation of Meletus is intended as a serious effort to refute the charges against Socrates by reasoned means. But the way in which Plato has fashioned this exchange as a reenactment of the *agon* in Aristophanes' comedy surely indicates that we are not expected to apply the rigors of philosophical thinking to it. One does not, after all, need to be a philosopher to recognize that making your accuser look silly does not exonerate you. Of course, it is a matter of historical fact that Socrates was condemned, so it is not a matter of legal or forensic exoneration. But on the (reasonable) assumption that the *Apology* represents the thinking of Plato and not the actual form of defense used by Socrates at his trial, one would at least expect Plato to be interested in avoiding conspicuous logical *faux pas*. That he has not done so in this instance suggests that a particular point is being made.

I propose that the point being made has to do, as is the case with so much else in the *Apology*, with the deleterious conventions of contemporary rhetorical practice and, further, that the particular convention being put on display can be traced to its origins in the drama, specifically tragic drama. Or, rather, we are dealing with a constellation of conventions on which Plato has set his sights in the interrogation of Meletus.

In Chapter 8, we examined a number of rhetorical conventions, some of which were recognized already by ancient theorists and were given technical names, which, in some instances, continue to be used even today. We have for the most part avoided using those technical terms, and some explanation of that avoidance is in order. For one thing, as we saw in the case of “*tis*-Reden” and “*prokatalēpsis*,” unless terms are defined with sufficient precision there is danger of overlap and, consequently, potential confusion. For another, a given utterance may exemplify more than one rhetorical strategy, and labeling an utterance as an instance of X, which may indeed be accurate, runs the risk of obscuring the fact that the utterance is also an instance of Y. There is a tendency, further, when identifying rhetorical commonplaces to atomize the literary text, potentially losing sight of the larger context and, with it, the further rhetorical aim that is being served. Finally, in a Platonic context we are guilty of imposing terms and concepts that Plato himself might have ridiculed. Indeed, in the *Phaedrus* (266d–68a) Plato does represent Socrates as holding up to ridicule some of the technical terminology that was already beginning to inundate contemporary rhetorical theory.

The case of *prokatalēpsis* provides a good example of the potential problems involved. We noted in Chapter 8 (p. 181) that a commentator on Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* identified as an instance of that figure a passage in which a speaker anticipates, and then refutes, a potential objection that his opponent in debate might bring, and then the commentator went on to cite as further examples of the phenomenon passages in which a potential objection was not involved, passages that would be more appropriately identified as potential *tis*-Reden. In potential *tis*-Reden what is at issue is not a reasoned argument that might be brought against the speaker’s point of view but simply a projection of what “someone might say” in response to the kind of behavior under discussion. The latter is well documented in the Homeric poems; the former arises in situations in which the speaker is compelled to construct potential counterarguments, either as a result of rhetorical training or because the speaker’s words were composed by a dramatist who was anticipating the arguments to be put into the mouth of the speaker’s opponent. Since there is good reason to believe that the development

of the drama predates the origins of rhetorical training and rhetorical theory, we have argued that the drama was the most likely place to locate the origin of the practice of anticipating potential objections to one's position. Confusion of *prokatalēpsis* with other phenomena that ought to be distinguished from it can be found elsewhere than in an isolated note on a line of Euripides. James Lees (1892: 407), for example, identifies another passage in *Suppliant Women* (314 ff.) as an occurrence of *prokatalēpsis*, but it too is an instance of one speaker attempting to shame another by pointing out what "someone will say" if his projected course of action is maintained. Elsewhere, Stephen Usher (1999: 247) notes the peculiarity of Demosthenes' "use of *prokatalēpsis* to describe intended actions rather than intended evidence" in section 38 of his speech *Against Conon*. In the first place, *prokatalēpsis* ought to be used to refer to an anticipation of intended argument, not evidence. In the second place, it makes little sense to apply a label to a phenomenon (in this instance, anticipation of intended action) and then observe how unusual the usage is.¹¹ In Demosthenes' speech, the accuser tells the jury that he has learned that the defendant is planning to bring his own children into the court and to have them stand next to him while he swears an oath and calls down dreadful curses upon them should he be guilty of the charge against him. This is a tactic, not an argument, and the speaker is privy to outside intelligence, so his anticipation does not derive from a contemplation of potential counterarguments.

More problematic is Colin Macleod's reference to *prokatalēpsis* in connection with Cleon's speech in Thucydides, Book Three. According to Macleod (1978: 69 = 1983: 93): "In ch. 38 Cleon tries to head off possible counter-arguments. In rhetorical language this is a προκατάληψις; more specifically it consists in blackening the character of any opponent (διαβολή)." Heading off possible counterarguments is indeed appropriately described by the term *prokatalēpsis*, but what we find in chapter 38 is, rather, Cleon "blackening the character" of anyone who would dare to oppose his position, for such a person must either resort to deceptive reasoning to persuade the Assembly that it had not reached a decision that it had in fact reached or he must be guilty of accepting bribes. The depravity of one's opponent, or of any likely opponent, is one thing, an argument that might be brought against one's position is another, and it is well to distinguish between them. If the term *prokatalēpsis* is to be used to refer to any kind of anticipation whatsoever – speculation regarding what someone will say if a particular course of action is adopted, proleptic discrediting of the opponent's character, foreknowledge of the other party's defensive strategy, advance demolition of possible objections to one's own arguments – it is much too vague to be useful and certainly does not

deserve to be ennobled as a technical term of art with a fancy Greek name.

We owe the term to the fourth-century treatise known as the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (Chapter 8, p. 181). Or, at any rate, this is where we find its earliest occurrence, and we may attribute at least some of the lasting confusion over the term to its author. Chapter 18 of the treatise consists of an extended discussion of what the author calls “*prokatalipsis*.” He begins with a definition:

Anticipation is the method by which we shall counteract the ill-feeling which is felt against us by anticipating the adverse criticisms of our audience and the arguments of those who are going to speak against us.¹²

To begin with, this sentence provides an excellent illustration of the intensely competitive, even adversarial, nature of public life in ancient Greece. It is simply assumed that anyone speaking in a public venue, whether a legislative body or a court of law, will be subjected to unfavorable prejudice, because the very act of expressing oneself in public is viewed as a presumptuous attempt to impose one’s will on one’s listeners. This is reflected in the author’s use of the strong terms “ill-feeling” and “adverse criticisms.” These expressions are associated, not with one’s legal opponent, whose “arguments” have to be anticipated, but with one’s “audience,” that is to say, the members of the jury or one’s fellow assemblymen, it being unnecessary to specify that one can expect one’s legal opponent to be hostile.

In view of this inevitable hostility, the public speaker must act to forestall its effects, by anticipating the audience’s predisposition to criticize and by preparing in advance refutations of one’s opponent’s likely arguments. We saw the former illustrated already in Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women*, from the 460s BC, when Danaus instructed his daughters to adopt a modest manner in addressing the Argives, whom he characterized as a race “ready to take offence.” The latter we observed in a number of passages in the plays of Euripides. The Euripidean passages involved opposing arguments, like what might be encountered in a court of law, which was not the case in Aeschylus, where the daughters of Danaus were preparing to make a public appeal to the citizens of Argos, asking for asylum. This distinction, between one’s formal antagonist and one’s audience, dictates the organization of the discussion of *prokatalipsis* in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. (It must be borne in mind, however, that the mentality of the ancient Greeks, for whom everyone is at least potentially one’s antagonist, renders this distinction less neat than it might ordinarily be.) First the author addresses “the criticisms of our audience” (1432b14–33a32), then “what is likely to be said by one’s opponents”

(1433a32–b16). The first section is essentially a lesson in audience control, and assumes that one's listeners are given to frequent outbursts, provoked by any statement likely to prove controversial or offensive. The Greek word for such rowdy behavior (*thorybos*, "commotion") is used some dozen times by the author of this treatise, all in this chapter. That this type of behavior was indeed to be expected is suggested by the fact that Socrates, in Plato's *Apology*, on more than one occasion asks his listeners not to raise an outcry over what he says.¹³ The first section, in which the author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* addresses the criticisms of the audience, is itself divided into two parts, the first dealing with the criticisms faced by the person who addresses a public assembly (1432b14–34), the second with those faced by a litigant (1432b34–33a32). When speaking before the assembly, one should assure one's audience that one is presenting useful advice and that one is indeed qualified to do so, despite any apparent indications to the contrary; if the audience continues to be unruly, the author recommends that the speaker attempt to shame them into giving the speaker a fair hearing. Similarly, when addressing a jury, whether one is bringing charges or is a defendant, one should invoke the law and the jurors' general sense of fairness in order that one's case not be drowned out by shouting.

The discussion of anticipation of what one's opponent is likely to say is likewise divided into two sections: when one is bringing charges and is thus the first to speak (1433a32–40) and when one is a defendant, refuting charges that have already been presented before the court (1433a40–b16). In the first instance one should expect that the accused will plead poverty. Presumably the author of the treatise is using this merely as an example of the kind of standard commonplace that defendants traditionally employ – even Socrates is shown resorting to it in Plato's *Apology* (23c, 31c) – which the speaker is well advised to anticipate. The author goes on to recommend that, if one is speaking first, one should say of one's opponent, "I hear that he intends to say such and such a thing." It is not clear whether the author expects the speaker to have spied on his antagonist or is encouraging the speaker to lie about possessing privileged information. In any event, the author notes that the value of anticipating what one's opponent will say lies in his conviction that (1433a39–40) "even though the arguments which you forestall and discredit are quite forcible, they will appear much less weighty to those who have already heard them." Finally, the author gives advice to the speaker who has the last word in the proceedings, that is, the defendant in a criminal case. Naturally, he cannot anticipate his antagonist's speech, because it has already been delivered. Rather, the treatise is here concerned to provide the defendant with a means of

counteracting the accuser's indulgence in *prokatalipsis*, namely, by saying that the jury deserves to hear the defendant's arguments from his own mouth, rather than in the distorted form in which his accuser presented them. The author of the treatise then ends his discussion of *prokatalipsis* by commending the way in which Euripides employed this last strategy in his (now lost) *Philoctetes*, from which he quotes the following lines:

I'll speak myself, even if he seems to have cheated in destroying my argument by anticipation; you'll hear and †learn† my case from myself, and he †will make himself clear† to you in his own words.¹⁴

Interestingly, this is the only literary quotation in the treatise (Goebel 1983: 189), and it provides us with one of the earliest attested instances of the anticipation of an opponent's argument, for we know that *Philoctetes* is one of the earlier plays of Euripides, having been produced in 431 BC as part of the same tetralogy as *Medea*, which immediately preceded it on the program. Unfortunately, the lines are quoted in a corrupt and unmetrical form, nor is it clear who the speaker is or how exactly his opponent anticipated his argument.¹⁵ This fragment does, however, provide us with evidence that, already in 431 BC, Euripides was sufficiently familiar with the practice of anticipating one's opponent's arguments that he could call attention not only to the practice itself but to a strategy for minimizing its effectiveness.

We do, however, have a number of instances of what the author of the treatise calls "*prokatalipsis*" in the surviving plays of Euripides, and these have been analyzed in Michael Lloyd's study of the *agon* in Euripidean tragedy. As Lloyd points out (1992: 31), the "sophistication of the device lies in the fact that the speaker is not answering an objection which the opponent has actually made, but is imagining a hypothetical objection which he might make." Lloyd goes on to note that this tactic "seems to have been absorbed into Euripides' argumentative and rhetorical style." We saw in the previous chapter that there is a ready explanation for this, namely, that the very craft of the Attic playwright prompts him to anticipate and weigh the arguments for and against a position that he is designing for his characters to deploy. And the sophistication of Euripides' technique stands in stark contrast to the pedestrian "theorizing" of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, composed when Euripides' *Philoctetes* had been in circulation for more than a hundred years. For, what we find in Euripides is the anticipation and refutation of *arguments* that are potentially damaging to the speaker's position, arguments that the speaker's opponent generally does not attempt to use, because they

have already been shown to be invalid. The author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, on the other hand, is almost entirely concerned with *prejudices* that the speaker can easily predict he will be subject to or that he will already have some knowledge of; when he speaks of the anticipation of *arguments*, he seems to assume that those arguments will nonetheless be used by the opponent, which suggests that it required little ingenuity to anticipate them, as they represent the most damaging, and therefore perhaps the decisive, points in the opponent's favor.

So, for example, in Euripides' earliest surviving play, the *Alcestis* of 438 BC, Admetus berates his father for not having offered to die in his place, as Admetus' wife Alcestis has done. His father is elderly and therefore has not much longer to live. Attacking his father for having abandoned him to die and anticipating one possible response his father might make in his own defense, Admetus says, "Surely you won't say that I failed to treat you with respect in your old age" (658–59), which might have justified his father's reluctance to save his son's life. Admetus goes on to say that he has treated his father with utmost respect, nor is the point taken up in his father's angry reply. Instead, Admetus' father responds to his son's accusation of cowardice (642) by turning the tables, using a tactic that we will look at below, and calling his son a coward who has shown himself to be weaker than a woman (696–97). Michael Lloyd (1992: 38) says of this instance of *prokatalipsis* that "there is no way of deciding whether Admetus' words are a sophisticated variation of an established rhetorical device or a natural piece of self-expression which has yet to harden into a formula." Note the options, which are presented as though they are exhaustive alternatives: Either the poet is following the lead of those responsible for creating rhetorical devices or he is using a "natural" mode of expression that rhetoricians have not yet appropriated. It is, apparently, unimaginable that Euripides, "one of the most original dramatists of all time" (Kaufmann 1968: 243), in the process of devising arguments to put into his characters' mouths, might have thought to represent one of those characters as speculating regarding another character's train of thought.

This passage is typical of the way in which Euripides portrays characters thinking through and anticipating what their opponent in debate is likely to say. The discussion of *prokatalipsis* in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* is very different. As we have noted, the author is primarily interested in neutralizing the prejudice that the speaker knows, or can easily anticipate, will greet him and his speech. This is the case not only in the main treatment of the device in chapter 18, but in subsequent references to it as well, in chapters 29 and 36. For example, if the speaker is young, the treatise recommends how he

should counteract the prejudice to which the young are apparently subject (1432b14–17, 1442b9–11). Presumably the speaker will be in a good position to know whether this recommendation applies to him. When it comes to an anticipation of the opponent's arguments, the author is singularly lacking in creativity. His recommendation consists of saying that "you must minimize the arguments of your opponents and amplify your own" (1439b5–6), a recommendation that is so valuable that it bears repeating five lines later: "magnify your own arguments and weaken and minimize those of your adversaries" (1439b9–10). In the discussion in chapter 18, the author has less to say about anticipating arguments (1433a32–40) than he does about counteracting the points wherein one has been anticipated (1433a40–b14, the section in which he quotes from Euripides' *Philoctetes*). As noted above, the author can think of only two scenarios: anticipating that one's opponent will plead poverty and learning in advance (or claiming to have learned in advance) what specific arguments one's opponent is planning to use. The latter may not have required an advanced degree in divination, as litigants may have been forced to divulge the outlines of their strategy at the preliminary hearing (for which, see MacDowell 1978: 239–42), and several other opportunities were available for discovering the arguments one's opponent was likely to produce (Dorjahn 1935). Indeed, there seems even to have been some strategic advantage to allowing aspects of one's case to circulate publicly before the matter came to trial (Dorjahn 1935: 287–93). The author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* does not seem to envision a situation in which one has so thoroughly refuted an anticipated argument that one's opponent will avoid the subject entirely; rather, for him the purpose of *prokatalepsis* is to ensure that one's opponent does not have the dramatic advantage of being the first to spring an argument on the jury.

The author's representation of the strategy is borne out by the practice exhibited in the surviving works of the Attic orators, the evidence for which is fully examined in Alfred Dorjahn's 1935 study. On a number of occasions it can be inferred, or is even made explicit, that the prosecutor, speaking first, has advance knowledge of what his opponent will say in his defense. For example, in Hypereides' speech *Against Athenogenes* the speaker reveals that the defendant had said certain things to the speaker's relatives, including his father – what he said is lost in a gap in the papyrus that preserves the speech – and the speaker claims that he has heard that the defendant will say the same things in court (23). As Alfred Dorjahn (1935: 279) points out, we know from sections 4–5 of the speech that the two parties to the lawsuit had been in personal contact over the matter before the case went to the jury, so that the speaker's predictions regarding what

Athenogenes is likely to say (13, 19) probably derive, either directly or indirectly, from Athenogenes himself. The speaker of Lysias 10, *Against Theomnestus*, suggests to the jurors that perhaps the defendant “will say to you the very things he had the nerve to say to the arbitrator as well” (6), making it clear that the speaker did not have to resort to sophisticated reasoning in order to anticipate his opponent’s argument. In the case of Lysias 22, the speech *Against the Grain-Dealers*, we know that charges had been lodged against the defendants in the Council before the matter was brought to trial by jury, which allows the speaker to speculate with some confidence that the defendants “will say, just as they also said in the Council,” that their actions were dictated by feelings of good will toward the community (11). Although the grain dealers’ speech has not been recorded, we can feel confident that they did indeed say in their defense that they were acting out of good will toward the community, as this was a standard, almost formulaic, element of speeches for the defense.¹⁶

Even when they do have advance knowledge of what their opponent is planning to say, speakers in court cannot be counted on to reveal that they are privy to inside information; they may instead prefer to let the jurors assume that they are so clever that they have figured out beforehand their adversary’s thought-processes. We cannot, therefore, be certain that any of the several instances of *prokatalipsis* in the surviving works of the Attic orators represents complex reasoning on the part of the speaker. Indeed, as was the case with Lysias and the grain dealers, several of the recorded instances involve predictions of behavior that is so stereotyped that the speaker needed neither advance knowledge nor complex reasoning to be confident that his conjecture would be borne out. For example, if the defendant has brought his children with him into the court, as the speaker of Hypereides’ *Against Philippides* 9 tells the jurors his opponent has done, it is easy to predict that the defendant will parade them before the court in an appeal for the jurors’ pity.¹⁷ If the prosecutor knows that the defendant has performed public service in the past, he can be confident that his opponent will make a point of mentioning it in his defense, so as to present himself as a benefactor of the state. So Demosthenes, in his speech *Against Leptines* (20.151), predicts that Deinias, one of the advocates for the defense, will regale the jury with an account of the triremes he has subsidized and the other liturgies that he has performed.¹⁸ The man who delivered the first speech of Antiphon, *Against the Stepmother*, deserves no prizes for having “merely guessed” (Dorjahn 1935: 282) that his half-brother, in defending his mother on a charge of murder, will beg the jury that she not be punished for her crimes (22–24). Nor is it surprising that the speaker of Lysias 6, *Against Andocides*, predicts that Andocides, so far

from defending himself will actually seek to lay the blame on others (13), perhaps even accusing Cephisius, one of the men bringing charges against Andocides (42). As we will see, it is a common strategy in the Attic law court for a defendant to turn the tables on his adversary and “accuse in return” (ἀντικατηγορήσει), as Lysias puts it, his accuser.

As it happens, we know that Andocides did in fact accuse Cephisius of illegal activity. This is one of the rare instances in which speeches on both sides of a case are preserved, Lysias 6 being the speech of one of the prosecutors and Andocides 1, *On the Mysteries*, being Andocides’ speech in his own defense. Not only does Andocides accuse Cephisius of wrongdoing (92–93), but he accuses the other prosecutors as well, Meletus of murder (94), Epichares of prostitution and subverting the democracy (95–99), and Agyrrhius of illicit financial dealings (133–34). But the survival of both speeches is not as helpful as we might suppose. The very fact that each oration exists in written form raises the question of when it attained that form (Todd 2007: 403–8). Specifically, was this the previously prepared script which each speaker memorized for delivery in court, or does it represent a version of the speech revised for publication after the trial? If the latter, to what extent was it modified to take into account the outcome of the trial, the arguments used by the opposing speaker, and, perhaps, the published version of the opposing speech? These questions, of course, apply to all the speeches that have been preserved for us (Lowe 1993: 64), so that any instance of *prokatalipsis* in a surviving forensic speech may be suspected of having been added to the published version after the time of the trial. Even so, the instances of anticipation in the orators do not come close to the level of virtuoso argumentation that we find in the plays of Euripides, like the arguments involving probability that, as we saw in the previous chapter, Hippolytus and Theseus use to refute the arguments that they anticipate the other will use. Again, since all the occurrences in the Attic orators are later than some, and perhaps even all, of those in Euripides, what is there to encourage us to believe that the playwright is dependent on contemporary legal practice, rather than vice versa?

The instances just mentioned in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* raise a particularly interesting issue. Theseus is accusing his son of rape and, therefore, naturally speaks first. It is appropriate for him to anticipate and preemptively refute an argument that Hippolytus might use in his defense, namely, that Phaedra hated Hippolytus and left a suicide note falsely accusing him of the crime (962–70). Hippolytus, as the defendant in the case, as it were, speaks after his father has made his accusation. In a court of law the defendant has no business using the device of *prokatalipsis*, since there is nothing left for him to anticipate.

But this is not a court of law. It is a dramatic performance, and the audience will continue to be influenced by the words and actions to follow. And so Hippolytus, like his father, engages in the strategy as well, saying that it is incumbent upon Theseus to explain how it was that Hippolytus lost his sense of moral decency, and he proposes some possibilities which are then either refuted or deemed unworthy even of refutation (1008–20). We would not expect to find a defendant in an actual lawsuit using this device of *prokatalipsis* and, as far as I am aware, the only instances in the surviving speeches are a couple of rule-proving exceptions. The *Tetralogies* of Antiphon consist of pairs of speeches, in which prosecutor and defendant speak in alternation. The defendant in the third *Tetralogy* says that his opponent will argue that the fact that the victim is dead indicates that the defendant is liable under the law to punishment for the crime of manslaughter (4.2.3). In the first place, little imagination is required to predict the use of this argument, given that the defendant acknowledges the death of the victim and that he is on trial for manslaughter. In the second place, the *Tetralogies* are entirely fictional exercises in speech writing; they do not represent speeches that were actually delivered in a court of law. The same is the case with Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*, in which we again find a defendant "anticipating" an argument that the prosecution might be expected to use. Palamedes addresses his accuser Odysseus and says, "You will perhaps say that it is fair that you not be required to produce witnesses to what, according to you, happened, whereas I must produce witnesses to what has not happened" (23). Palamedes then proceeds to argue that, on the contrary, it is quite unfair to demand that he produce witnesses to a crime that did not, as he claims, in fact take place. This is all very entertaining and, of course, is nothing more than Gorgias' playful projection back into the legendary world of the Trojan War.

These, then, are the occurrences, both of them fictional, of the figure of *prokatalipsis* in the mouth of a defendant. Not wanting to be outdone, and being unwilling to omit any rhetorical device that might usefully be exploited, Plato ingeniously supplies Socrates, the defendant in an actual trial in 399 BC, with a modified version of the figure. Plato's *Apology*, of course, is not identical with the speech that the historical Socrates delivered at his trial, although, unlike Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes* and the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon, it does bear some undeterminable relationship to an actual forensic oration. It is, therefore, conceivable that Socrates did in fact say something resembling what he is represented as saying at *Apology* 20c. Even so, what he says there is hypothetical in a higher degree – if this is a legitimate concept – than what is normally the case with this rhetorical figure. Ordinarily, one hypothesizes regarding what

argument one's actual adversary might use. But Socrates claims that the most dangerous charges lodged against him are not those brought by the current litigants but those that have circulated over a number of years and cannot be attributed to an identifiable individual, "with the exception of a certain comic poet," namely, Aristophanes (18c-d). For this reason, Socrates is compelled to formulate the accusations of these anonymous adversaries himself and then refute them. But the reason these charges are so potent is that they are of long standing, and the members of the jury have internalized them as a result of their frequent repetition. And the very fact that the promulgators of the charges are anonymous means that some members of the jury may themselves have been responsible for spreading them. That being the case, it may not be possible to distinguish absolutely between accusers and jurors, a point that Plato makes with considerable delicacy when he has Socrates say (20c):

Perhaps someone of you [jurors] might make the following rejoinder: "Well, Socrates, what exactly is it that you do? What is the cause of these slanderous accusations against you? For surely such notoriety hasn't arisen without your being involved in some activity that sets you apart from the rest."

What Plato (or, less likely, Socrates) has done is to think himself into the mind, not only of the prosecution, but also into that of the jury, to the extent that these can be differentiated. Socrates then flatters the jury by telling them that he considers these hypothetical questions to be justified (δικαία, 20d), but it becomes immediately apparent that this flattery is not seriously intended. For his explanation of the cause of the slanders involves telling the story of how no less an authority than the god Apollo set Socrates apart from the rest of his fellow citizens by proclaiming that there was no one wiser than Socrates. By his skillful adaptation of this rhetorical device Plato subtly makes the jury complicit with the prosecution, appropriately enough, since, as Plato knows, the jury will vote to condemn him.

In composing his *Apology*, then, Plato was in a position similar to that of the Attic dramatists who, in their staging of confrontations between mythical characters, could count on their audience's familiarity with the outlines of the story and exploit that familiarity for "dramatic" effect.¹⁹ Also, the dramatists were not constrained by the formal requirements of Attic legal procedure, so that, for example, Euripides could have "the accused" speak first, an opportunity that he takes advantage of in his *Electra*, when Clytaemestra defends herself in a lengthy speech (1011-50) before she is arraigned in an equally long speech (1060-99) by her daughter. In this instance, we are dealing simply with an argument between two people, and Euripides wishes,

for legitimate dramatic reasons, to give Electra the last word. The matter is more complicated and more interesting in *Trojan Women*. There, Menelaus has determined that he is going to put Helen to death for her infidelity and for having caused the death of so many Greeks, but he has decided not to carry out the punishment at Troy; rather he will bring her back to Greece and execute her at home (873–79). Everyone in the audience knows, from their familiarity with Book Four of the *Odyssey*, that Helen will be alive and well and living with Menelaus in Sparta 10 years after the end of the Trojan War. Whatever happens on stage will have no effect on the future course of events (Solmsen 1975: 31). Still, Euripides dramatizes a debate between Helen and Hecuba, with Menelaus serving in the capacity as judge. Hecuba, speaking as it were for the prosecution, reserves the right to speak second (906–8), which allows Helen, as “defendant,” to anticipate arguments that she imagines her accuser might use. Except that Helen addresses herself entirely to Menelaus and anticipates arguments that *he* might use. After first claiming that Hecuba, and not she herself, was the ultimate cause of all the misfortunes by giving birth to Paris (919–20), Helen seeks to convince Menelaus that, so far from harming Menelaus and the Greeks, she is actually their benefactor (932–34). For, if Aphrodite had not been successful in using her as a bribe to win the prize in the Judgment of Paris, Menelaus and the Greeks would have been subjected to defeat or conquest at the hands of the barbarians. In doing this, Helen is treating Hecuba the way defendants in court treat their accusers, by accusing them in turn, and she is treating Menelaus the way defendants treat the jury, by claiming to be their benefactor.

Helen then engages in what appears to be the first of two instances of *prokatalipsis* (M. Lloyd 1992: 31). She says, still addressing Menelaus, “You will say that I am not yet addressing the salient issue, namely that I furtively left your house” (938–39). She defends herself from this charge by claiming that she was subjected to *force majeure*, namely, that Paris brought with him an irresistible goddess, Aphrodite. Helen has now gone from treating Menelaus as though he were her judge to treating him as her accuser, a practice which she continues by accusing him in turn. Calling him “most despicable” (ὦ κάκιστε, 943), she berates her husband for going off and leaving her with Paris in his house, implying that the whole matter was Menelaus’ fault. Then, as if in disgust at finding herself having to address so worthless an individual, she temporarily abandons her *prokatalipsis*, which ought in any case to have been directed to her adversary rather than to her judge, and addresses her next question to herself, asking herself what made her leave home with Paris and answering by referring to the power of Aphrodite, which even the ruler of the gods

cannot withstand.²⁰ This, of course, is not an effective way of securing the good will of a judge, but we know that Helen has other means of persuasion at her disposal, which she will bring to bear after the action of the play has ended. These means of persuasion, not incidentally, have everything to do with Aphrodite, as she insinuates when she returns to addressing her husband, challenging him to prove himself superior to Zeus if he can manage to rein in the powerful goddess (948). She then goes on to anticipate and address another argument that Menelaus might use, namely, that she ought to have turned herself over to the Greeks once Paris was dead, something that she claims she repeatedly tried to do and was repeatedly thwarted (951–58).

Hecuba's speech in response is successful in the sense that Menelaus claims to have been convinced by it (1036–39). Unusually for a tragic *agon*, the arguments that are anticipated by the first speaker are actually addressed by the second and an attempt is made to refute them: Hecuba claims that it was not Aphrodite that caused Helen to run off with Paris but her lack of good sense and her immoderate desires (983–97); in response to Helen's claim that she attempted to return to the Greeks Hecuba says that she herself offered to help Helen leave Troy, but Helen refused (1016–19). These attempts to address Helen's arguments are themselves in various ways problematic and are impossible to verify or properly assess (Croally 1994: 145–59; M. Lloyd 1992: 105–10). We have seen, however, that the position that Hecuba advocates – namely, that Helen should be put to death – is the position that Menelaus held from the start. Euripides conveys the apparent hopelessness of Helen's situation by having her treat her judge as though he is the accuser, anticipating his arguments, which are then taken up not by him but by Hecuba, in unsatisfactory fashion. We have seen that Plato will do the same thing in his *Apology*, when he represents Socrates as anticipating an argument that members of the jury might make. Plato's audience knows that Socrates will be condemned to death. Euripides' audience, on the other hand, knows that Helen will be spared. In the tragedy that immediately preceded *Trojan Women* in Euripides' tetralogy for 415 BC, the lost *Palamedes*, the innocent Palamedes was condemned to death, even though he apparently delivered a speech defending himself against the false charges brought by Odysseus (Collard, Cropp, and Gibert 2004: 95). In frag. 578 Kannicht, nine lines of a speech by Palamedes are preserved in which, by enumerating his various inventions, he appears to adhere to the convention by which a defendant seeks to present himself as a benefactor to those about to pass judgment on him. In the *Defense of Palamedes*, Gorgias' Palamedes also engages in this conventional means of securing the good will of

his judges, recounting a number of ways in which he improved human existence in order to demonstrate his status as a great benefactor (μέγας εὐεργέτης, 30). It will be remembered that we saw in Chapter 7 (pp. 127–28) that, well before either Euripides' play or Gorgias' speech, Aeschylus had put Palamedes on the Attic stage, describing how his cultural innovations benefited the lives of the Greeks. If this occurred in a speech in which Palamedes defended himself against Odysseus' accusations – we have only meager fragments of the play and do not know from what context they come – it may have been the playwright Aeschylus who first explored the practice, later to become nearly universal in Attic courtrooms, of teaching defendants to use a claim of being a benefactor to the jury as a means of courting favor.

In any event, Palamedes' strategy was unsuccessful. Of course, that was inevitable, as it was an unalterable datum of the myth that Palamedes was unjustly put to death. What was not inevitable was that Euripides and Gorgias (and perhaps Sophocles and Aeschylus as well) should compose eloquent speeches with which Palamedes sought to defend himself. But the challenge of writing a defense speech for someone unjustly accused and convicted must have been irresistible, as was the challenge of writing a speech in which the innocence of Helen, universally reviled as guilty of adultery and desertion of her husband, was upheld, a challenge that neither Euripides nor Gorgias (nor Gorgias' pupil Isocrates) could turn down. In each instance – Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Palamedes* and Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes* – the speakers are presented as being fully conversant with the rhetorical strategies that were, presumably, developed for the purpose of enhancing one's chances of success in persuasion. And the same is true of Plato's Socrates, who uses all manner of rhetorical commonplaces, including the claim that “there has never been a greater benefit” to the citizens of Athens than his divinely ordained activities.²¹ We see, then, some of the most proficient verbal technicians of the late fifth and early fourth centuries using their declamatory virtuosity in the service of causes that are doomed to failure. In the case of Helen in *Trojan Women*, we know that ultimately she will not fail in her effort to evade punishment, but Euripides has gone out of his way to construct a scenario in which it is clear that her verbal dexterity has nothing to do with the final outcome. Of course, in the *agones* of tragedy, to the extent that there is a “winner” and a “loser,” the dramatist knew from the start that he was committing himself to providing arguments to two speakers, one of whom would come off worse than the other.

In a court of law, also, there was a winner and a loser, and half the speeches delivered must have failed to persuade the jury. The difference, however, between the law court and the stage was that in

the case of the latter the speeches were composed by someone who already knew the outcome of the proceedings and who knew in advance what arguments would be used on either side. This allowed for much greater inventiveness on the part of the dramatist, an inventiveness that was shared by Gorgias and Plato, who likewise composed fictionalized, *post eventum* speeches. The dramatist could also engage in much riskier and more speculative types of argumentation. The stage was, in effect, the tragic poet's laboratory in which forms of argumentation could be explored and tested. In the case of anticipation, as we have suggested, it is natural to see the stage as the place where the practice originated. In any event, we have seen that it is put to much more creative use by Euripides than by the Attic orators whose work postdated his, and even the theoretician who wrote the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* acknowledges and admires the skill with which the fifth-century dramatist exploited the strategy.

In the course of our discussion we have had frequent occasion to mention another common practice, that of turning the tables on one's accuser by accusing one's adversary in turn. As anticipation is by its nature a strategy that is appropriate to the accuser, who by convention speaks first in a trial, accusing one's accuser belongs in the mouth of the defendant. Plato does this in his *Apology* by having Socrates accuse Meletus of wrongdoing (ἀδικεῖν φημι Μέλητον, 24c). Thomas Meyer (1962: 59) notes that "such answering of charge with countercharge is a favorite topos of litigants," and he cites a number of examples from the Attic orators. Indeed, the practice is so commonplace that Aeschines, in his speech *Against Timarchus* (1.178–79), anticipates that the defendant will bring counteraccusations against him, and he chastises the Athenians for allowing themselves to be distracted by such diversionary tactics. (Of course, Aeschines is himself engaging in a diversionary tactic by bringing prosecution preemptively against Timarchus, who was preparing, along with Demosthenes, to bring charges against Aeschines.) The frequency with which defendants in Athenian courts seek to defend themselves by attacking their accusers is astonishing, and seems explicable only in terms of the hyperagonistic public life characteristic of fifth- and fourth-century Athens. As we have seen, the practice seems already to have been a cliché at the time of Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*, in which the defendant ostentatiously declines to use a recital of Odysseus' "many great offenses" (27) to his own advantage. Such attacks are not unknown even in our own time. In 2005, for example, the popular singer Michael Jackson was put on trial in Santa Maria, California, on charges that included child molestation. His acquittal was widely seen as a vindication of the defense's tactic of attacking the credibility and moral character of the mother of the alleged

victim. According to Jonathan Turley (2005),

On the stand, the mother admitted that she had made false allegations in a prior lawsuit and neatly fit the profile of a conniving, predatory personality. Even after she pleaded with the jury “don’t judge me,” they seemed not only to judge but to convict her. Indeed, jurors had more to say about her than Jackson after the verdict, including her nasty habit of snapping her fingers at them.

If the strategy of the attorneys for the defense was inspired by an acquaintance with Plato’s *Euthyphro* (this chapter, p. 186), devotees of American popular music owe a surprising debt of gratitude to the lasting effects of a classical education.

A musician of a very different sort was a litigant in a lawsuit in Chicago in 1999. Four years earlier, the young violinist Rachel Barton (now Pine) was involved in an accident when the strap of her violin case was caught in the door of a metropolitan train and she was dragged, causing severe injuries, including the loss of one of her legs. She brought suit against the commuter rail agency for negligence, claiming compensation for her injuries and for the damage done to her promising career as a soloist. The attorneys representing the Chicago & North Western Transportation Company and the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation argued – unsuccessfully, as it turned out – that Barton was herself negligent and that, therefore, the agency was not liable for damages. The defense even sought to show that, so far from her career being harmed by the injury, the notoriety surrounding the accident and the trial might serve to enhance her name recognition (DiRago 2006: 26). Not only did the accused accuse the accuser, but also the accused in this instance argued that, so far from blaming the accused, the accuser ought to be grateful to the accused.

The case of Rachel Barton Pine (who does, by the way, now have a flourishing, though somewhat restricted, career) illustrates one difference between our own legal system and that of the ancient Athenians. For, while the jury at her trial found in her favor and awarded substantial monetary compensation to her, that compensation was reduced by 4.5%, since she was determined to be at fault to just that degree (DiRago 2006: 30). No such accommodation could be made in an Athenian court, however. Jurors had only the options of voting for or against the defendant. And, there being no corporate entities in ancient Athens that could be the target of litigation, the defendant was regularly a single individual, whose responsibility, and often whose credibility and character, were subjected to public scrutiny and judgment. That is not to say that the ancient Greeks failed to recognize that fault could be shared among

multiple agents. In fact, individual Greeks are happy to cast blame onto any number of agents, as Helen does in defending herself in *Trojan Women*. According to her, the guilty parties include Hecuba, “the old man” who failed to put the infant Paris to death, Paris himself, Menelaus, and the goddess Aphrodite.²² And in the *Iliad*, before Agamemnon announces that he is prepared to make restitution to Achilles for causing the quarrel that arose between them, he says that he himself was not to blame, but rather Zeus and Fate and the Erinyes (19.86–87), and he goes on to claim that his judgment was impaired by the goddess Delusion.

Of course, there are times when a number of individuals share responsibility for a crime, as in the case of conspiracy or piracy. But even in instances in which there are multiple defendants, Athenian law seems to have insisted that they be tried individually, as is illustrated by the prosecution of the generals following the battle of Arginousai in 406 BC. Eight of the generals were tried and convicted on a single vote, a procedure that was challenged (by, among others, Socrates) as contrary to the law, since each defendant was alleged to be entitled to trial on his own. Although the challenge was not upheld and although it appears that there may in fact have been no legal grounds for preventing the mass trial (MacDowell 1978: 186–89), the incident shows that ordinarily an individual was expected to be judged on his own as being either guilty or not guilty of the charges brought against him. Defendants in ancient law courts must have faced considerable difficulty in demonstrating their innocence, since for the most part they lacked the kinds of forensic or documentary evidence that someone today might use to refute accusations of wrongdoing. If I am accused of robbing the First National Bank of Albuquerque, for instance, I might use visas, airline receipts, or other instruments to prove that I was actually in Qatar on the date of the crime. Evidence of this sort, not to mention such things as the results of DNA testing, were in short supply in fourth-century Athens. But this type of evidence, crucial though it may be for the defendant, is of little interest to the rhetorical theorist, as it is not relevant to the “art” (*techne*) of rhetoric. Aristotle famously divides means of persuasion (πίσταις) into “atechnic” and “entechnic” means (*Rhetoric* 1355b35). He would consider DNA testing to fall under the “atechnic” category, perhaps best rendered “non-rhetorical means of persuasion,” and he devotes only a small proportion of his treatise (Book One, chapter 15) to a discussion of how these means are to be used. Instead, Aristotle and others who concern themselves with the art of rhetoric spend their time theorizing about how to use reasoned argument to present one’s case, how to manipulate the emotions of one’s audience, and how to represent oneself as being trustworthy. Given the way in which

self-presentation in ancient Athens often took the form of a one-on-one, win-or-lose confrontation, it is perhaps understandable that the representation of oneself as trustworthy frequently entailed the representation of one's adversary as untrustworthy, even though this will not bear up under the scrutiny of strict logic.

Let us look at some examples from the surviving works of the orators. In the first speech of Hypereides, *In Defense of Lycophron*, the defendant complains to the jury that, in general, prosecutors have an advantage over defendants because, by speaking first, they have an opportunity to prejudice the minds of the jurors (8–10). He then goes on to note that, in the present case, the accuser has done just that, by dictating the terms according to which the jurors should listen to the speech for the defense, thus depriving the defendant of the possibility of conducting his defense in the way he would have liked to do (11). This is the method of defense that, as we have seen, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* approves, quoting from Euripides' *Philoctetes* by way of example. The defendant then goes on the offensive, accusing the accuser of violating "all the laws,"²³ inasmuch as he has brought an *eisangelia* in a case in which the law requires that a *graphe* be filed with the *thesmothetai* (12). Hypereides' speech *In Defense of Euxenippus* also raises the question of whether an *eisangelia* is an appropriate method of prosecution in a case like the present one; indeed, the speaker opens by railing against the increasingly common practice of using this type of prosecution even in cases that do not involve major issues of state security. But, just as in the speech for Lycophron, so here Hypereides recognizes that the defense cannot rely on this technicality, and he uses a variety of means to argue that Euxenippus is not guilty of accepting a bribe. In this speech too he mentions, but only in passing (10), the advantage enjoyed by prosecutors, who have the privilege of speaking first, and he claims that the prosecutor proposed a decree that he characterizes as "not only unjust in the extreme but self-contradictory as well" (15). In neither case would the accusations brought against the accuser, if true, entail the defendant's innocence, but the speaker's aim is to persuade the jurors to acquit the defendant, and one means of doing that is to prejudice them against the person who has brought the defendant before the court.

Hypereides' contemporary Aeschines uses a good deal of character assassination in his speech *On the Embassy*, in which he defends himself on charges of having allowed himself to be bribed by Philip, charges brought by Demosthenes in his surviving speech *On the Embassy*. Among the accusations that Aeschines levels at his rival orator is that Demosthenes had previously been subjected to a fine imposed by the Council of the Areopagus and that he was the

illegitimate son of a manufacturer of knives (93). Later in the speech, by way of contrast, Aeschines asserts his own legitimate pedigree (147–48) and claims that Demosthenes, to whom he hesitates even to apply the title of “a man,” had been indicted for desertion of his military post, a charge that he evaded by paying off the man who filed the indictment and whom he later conspired to murder (148). In the next section of the speech Aeschines extols the virtues of his brothers, one of whom “did not bed his own wife down with Cnosion” as Demosthenes, according to Aeschines, had done. Aeschines follows this up by referring to Demosthenes as a *kinaidos* (151), someone who is shamefully and culpably lacking in control over his sexual appetites (J.N. Davidson 2007: 59–66). Finally, in sections 165–66 of *On the Embassy* Aeschines accuses Demosthenes of being a traitor, alleging that he took a fee for writing a speech in defense of Phormio, a speech which he then handed over to Apollodorus, the man who was prosecuting Phormio on a capital charge, leaving it to his audience to infer that Demosthenes collected a fee from Apollodorus as well. Aeschines names two others whom Demosthenes cheated in similar ways. All of this, of course, is irrelevant to the validity of the charge brought against Aeschines, but by diminishing the character of his adversary Aeschines hopes to enhance his own standing in the eyes of the jurors.

But the crown, so to speak, for character assassination deserves to be awarded to Demosthenes himself. His speech *For Phormio*, oration 36, is not actually a speech for the defense, but was delivered in support of the *paragraphe* entered by Phormio, that is, a legal action brought preemptively to forestall on technical grounds pending litigation, in this case litigation by Apollodorus.²⁴ This is, then, in the literal sense an instance of putting the accuser on trial, and the speech is accordingly rife with attacks on the character and even the mental state of Phormio’s adversary. In section 48, for example, Demosthenes claims that insanity is the only word appropriate to describe Apollodorus’ current behavior and he says that the claims made by Apollodorus against Phormio apply just as well to Apollodorus himself. Given Demosthenes’ talent for invective, it is not surprising that the great majority of his works are speeches for the prosecution, but his most famous oration, *On the Crown*, is in fact a speech in support of Ctesiphon, the defendant in the case for which Aeschines composed his *Against Ctesiphon*. Ctesiphon, a loyal supporter of Demosthenes and his policies, had proposed that the people of Athens enact a decree honoring Demosthenes for his services to the city and rewarding him with a golden crown to be presented to him in a public ceremony. Aeschines, taking advantage of this opportunity to embarrass Demosthenes, brought charges against Ctesiphon, alleging

that the proposal was made in contravention of the law. *On the Crown* is, accordingly, much concerned with the rivalry between Demosthenes and Aeschines, with the speaker using every available means to justify his policies and present his character in a favorable light. These means naturally included condemning Aeschines' policies and presenting his character in the worst light possible. Out of consideration for my reader's presumable aversion from tedium, I will pass over in silence untold passages in which Demosthenes reviles his rival, and will content myself with recounting only a few out of many. Demosthenes includes Aeschines in the class of traitors and men on the take whose prospects of being bribed are, paradoxically, protected by the actions of vigilant patriots like himself (49). Later, after making the surprising claim that he is loath to resort to abuse (126), he launches into a cadenza of vituperation, addressing Aeschines as "scum," castigating him for a want of proper upbringing and accusing him of being incapable of distinguishing between what is honorable and what is not (128), before describing the servile, impoverished status of Aeschines' parents (129). Then (131) he accuses Aeschines of ingratitude toward his fellow citizens: After they allowed him the opportunity to raise himself up from slavery and poverty, he has paid them back by hiring himself out to further the interests of their enemies. Demosthenes later returns to a consideration of Aeschines' lowly origins, describing the menial tasks that he performed as a child (258) and ridiculing his participation in the mystic initiation rites over which his mother presided (259–60). In later life, according to Demosthenes, Aeschines was removed from his (contemptible) post as secretary and dogsbody to minor magistrates for having committed the very offenses with which he charges others (261). Further, Aeschines was nothing more than a second-rate actor who played bit parts (262) and he showed himself to be a coward when he tried to play a role in public life (263). Demosthenes accuses Aeschines of having lied about his connections with Philip, connections that rendered him a traitor to his city (283–84). How appalling that this treasonous individual should be engaged in abusing and reviling someone like Demosthenes, who least of all deserves such treatment.

When one reads *On the Crown* it is easy to forget that the defendant in the case is Ctesiphon and that the case involves technical charges of illegality in the way in which Ctesiphon proposed his decree. And it is easy to see how the jury, hearing Demosthenes' impassioned delivery, either forgot or chose to ignore the legal issue and voted overwhelmingly in Ctesiphon's, or rather Demosthenes', favor (Usher 1993: 14–18). This, of course, was what Demosthenes intended. While *On the Crown* is perhaps the most prominent and successful instance of putting the accuser on trial, the tactic was not original with

Demosthenes, and we can see it exemplified in the work of earlier Attic orators as well. Isocrates' speech *On the Team of Horses* dates to the opening years of the fourth century and represents a portion of the speech written for the son of Alcibiades, also named Alcibiades. He was the defendant in a suit claiming damages incurred by his late father, a suit brought by an Athenian named Tisias, whom Isocrates subjects to verbal abuse in sections 43–44. Tisias should be ashamed of himself for bringing charges against good democrats when he himself, a relative by marriage of the despicable Charicles, served as a member of the Council under the Thirty Tyrants and is violating the terms of the amnesty enacted in 403 BC by engaging in the current litigation. Were it not for the amnesty, Tisias would be subject to much more serious liability than Alcibiades is facing at the present time, for no jury would be inclined to overlook the crimes of which Tisias is guilty. Alcibiades hopes that he will have an opportunity to expatiate at greater length regarding Tisias' crimes on some future occasion, should Tisias ever face trial himself (45).

Fifth-century orators also are familiar with the practice of using an attack on the accuser as part of the defendant's strategy. In his speech *On the Mysteries*, delivered in 400 BC, Andocides defends himself in part by attacking his various accusers, among whom is Epichares, another man who served on the Council at the time of the Thirty (95). Andocides reviles him as "a sycophant and a damned fox"²⁵ who, he insinuates, would have been convicted and executed but for the amnesty of 403. Further, according to Andocides, Epichares earns money disgracefully by taking fees from all comers for performing sexual services; what is more, his physical appearance is repellent (100). In reference to this passage, Douglas MacDowell (1962: 137) comments:

To us And.'s accusation of his accuser seems neither logical nor relevant; but such considerations never worried Greek orators, who were always ready to descend to personal abuse if they thought it would impress the jury.

Andocides seems to have impressed his jury, to judge from the fact that he was not convicted. By contrast, we do not know the verdict in the trial of Euxitheus, for whom Antiphon wrote *On the Murder of Herodes*, the speech that contains what is perhaps the earliest instance in surviving oratory of the tactic we are examining. The speaker claims that his accuser violated the law by using a legal maneuver allowing him to avoid swearing a solemn oath that he would confine his accusations to the single issue of the killing of Herodes (11). Since violation of the oath would have involved the accuser in a prayer for the annihilation of himself, his family, and his entire household, the

speaker implies that his accuser is so guilty as to be worthy of divine retribution. His accuser has manufactured laws for his own advantage and thinks that his own lawlessness trumps even the very laws themselves (12). Indeed, the accuser is the only person (15) who has had the audacity to set himself up as a lawgiver not for the betterment of the community but for its detriment. By abrogating existing laws the accuser is seeking unjustly to destroy the speaker. His very lawlessness is the strongest witness in the speaker's favor. Justice would be much better served if the prosecution were subjected to prosecution than is currently the case, with the defendant being accused unjustly by the accuser and his family (48).²⁶ The prosecution alleges that Euxitheus killed Herodes for his money, but it is more likely to be the case that the prosecution is hoping to get its hands on Euxitheus' money by having him convicted; if that were to happen, justice would be much better served by their being convicted by Euxitheus' relatives than by his being convicted by the relatives of the victim (59).

What is interesting about all of these passages, from Hypereides, Aeschines, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Andocides, and Antiphon, is that every one of them is addressed not to the jury but directly to the accuser. That is to say, each of them is an instance of the rhetorical figure of speech known as apostrophe, which has recently been the object of a thorough investigation by Stephen Usher (2010). What is especially interesting is that, according to Usher, the figure of apostrophe becomes increasingly frequent in Attic oratory, so that, in the earliest orators, the passages we have been considering are almost the only places where apostrophe is used. Usher conveniently provides a list (353–54) of occurrences, from which it emerges that *On the Mysteries* 99–100 is the only instance of apostrophe in the oratory of Andocides and *On the Team of Horses* 43–44 is the only instance in the larger corpus of Isocrates. Usher further claims that the passages we have looked at in *On the Murder of Herodes* (11–16, 48, 59) are the only examples in Antiphon, stating explicitly that “there is no apostrophe in the *Tetralogies*.” But he has missed one occurrence and, significantly, it too is a passage in which the defendant accuses his accuser. In the third *Tetralogy*, the fictional defendant is addressing a charge that he killed a man in a drunken brawl. He does not deny having injured the victim, but he claims that it was a case of self-defense and that, consequently, he is not culpable. The fact that the man died is the fault, not of the defendant, but of the prosecutors themselves, who entrusted the injured man to the care of an incompetent physician (4.2.4), a charge that the prosecutors address in their second speech (4.3.5). This claim by the defendant, that his accusers are themselves culpable, is the only instance of apostrophe in

the *Tetralogies*, just as the only examples of apostrophe in *On the Murder of Herodes* occur in just those passages in which the defendant accuses his accusers.

There are two other passages that are worth considering in this connection. The first is from Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*. Usher does not take Gorgias into account, perhaps because he is not an Attic orator. Usher's title and abstract (351) refer to "Greek" oratory, but his summary begins, "Apostrophe occurs with much greater frequency in later than in earlier *Athenian* oratory" (361, with my emphasis). In any event, there is a conspicuous occurrence of apostrophe in the *Defense of Palamedes*. It is generally the case with forensic, or quasi-forensic, speeches that the speaker addresses the members of the jury who are responsible for passing judgment, and so Palamedes devotes most of his time to speaking directly to his jurors, referring to his accuser Odysseus in the third person. But in section 22 he makes a point of turning to Odysseus and addressing him directly, which he continues to do until section 27, after which he resumes his address to the jury. We have already seen (in this chapter, p. 186) that what he does in section 27 is to forgo the opportunity, tempting though it is, to recount the many crimes committed by his accuser, whom he here addresses directly. That is to say, if Palamedes had deigned to engage in the practice of accusing his accuser, the attack would have occurred here, in his address to his adversary. The second passage is one that we have already looked at, the direct interrogation of Socrates' accuser in Plato's *Apology*. It is understandable that Usher does not include the *Apology* in his survey of apostrophe in Greek oratory. He does, however, discuss the practice of interrupting one's address to the jury in order to interrogate one's adversary, referring to it as "another purely rhetorical device associated with apostrophe" (359), and we have seen that Plato's *Apology* includes an extended passage in which Socrates directly interrogates Meletus. The purpose of the interrogation, as Socrates tells the members of the jury, is to demonstrate the truth of the proposition that, while Meletus claims that Socrates is guilty, Meletus is himself guilty (ἀδίκηϊν . . . ἀδίκηϊν, 24c).

What we see, then, is that there appears to be a tendency on the part of defendants, when they engage in the commonplace tactic of accusing their accusers, to address their accusers directly. Interestingly, the only instances of apostrophe in Antiphon, Andocides, and Isocrates are in speeches for the defense, and in each of those instances the speaker uses direct address for the purpose of attacking his accuser, a pattern that we find reflected also in Gorgias' and Plato's speeches for the defense. Among later orators, as Usher shows, apostrophe comes to be more widely and more frequently

used, both in speeches for the prosecution and for the defense. The fact that apostrophe is rather sparsely used by the earliest orators, increasing in frequency and scope through the fourth century, suggests that it was not a common occurrence in fifth-century courts. On the fifth-century tragic stage, however, characters who are in the position of having to defend themselves against verbal attacks regularly address themselves directly to their accusers, and their defense often takes the form of attacking their accusers in turn. An instructive example occurs in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, when Teiresias persists in refusing to answer Oedipus' questions regarding the circumstances of Laius' death. In anger, Oedipus reacts by accusing Teiresias of complicity in the murder, saying that he would accuse the prophet of having committed the deed on his own if he happened not to be blind (346–49). Teiresias' immediate response is to accuse Oedipus of being the killer of Laius (350–51, 362). In Bernard Knox's classic analysis of the play, in which he emphasizes the play's connections with legal practice and terminology, Knox says (1957: 84), "The accusation is hurled back at him at once, a common phenomenon in the Attic law court where it was clearly a time-honored maxim that the best means of defense is attack." To illustrate the phenomenon Knox cites in a footnote Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*, to which Athenian legal practice is irrelevant, Antiphon's third *Tetralogy*, a speech of Lysias (25) and the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. The last two certainly date from a period after the death of Sophocles; we do not know the relative dates of Sophocles' play and the fictionalized speeches of Gorgias and Antiphon. As we have seen in the case of the argument from probability – an instance of which occurs later in the play, when Creon uses it to reject Oedipus' allegation of his involvement in the murder – it is difficult to find instances in the orators that demonstrably predate the earliest tragic occurrences.

In fact, this passage in *Oedipus the King* indicates that the tactic of accusing the accuser was already well known to the play's audience, but we cannot say for sure whether it was familiar from the law courts or, as our evidence suggests, from the tragic stage. It is not Teiresias' accusation, however, that is of interest in this connection. He is not using some legal or rhetorical strategy for deflecting the charge from himself when he accuses Oedipus of murdering Laius. Teiresias has known for years that Oedipus is the killer, which is precisely why he has been reluctant to answer Oedipus' questions. The dramatic success of the scene depends on the audience's familiarity with the general outline of the story, namely, that Oedipus is, however unknowingly, the guilty party. Only this, along with the audience's assumption that the divinely inspired Teiresias is likely to be aware of the truth of the matter, can account for the prophet's refusal to assist Oedipus in his

investigation of the murder. The reason he eventually names Oedipus as the murderer, after saying that he has nothing more to say (343), is that he has been provoked by Oedipus' charge that he was complicit in the murder. But how well motivated is Oedipus' accusation? According to Knox (84), in accusing Teiresias of involvement in the murder of Laius Oedipus only "makes explicit the accusation he hinted at before," namely, the "veiled accusation of complicity" in line 330. But in that line Oedipus merely asked Teiresias, incredulously, "Is it that you have some knowledge (ξυνειδώς) and will not tell?" It is true that the verb Oedipus uses can refer to complicity in a crime, but there is no reason to think that it does so here (Bollack 1990: 212). It is one thing to have some knowledge that may help in the investigation of a crime; it is something else altogether to be involved in the crime. Oedipus' accusation of Teiresias as complicit in the murder of Laius, therefore, must strike the audience as irrational – not a quality readily associated with this Oedipus – and unmotivated, unless, that is, Sophocles is counting on his audience's reasonable expectation that Teiresias will accuse Oedipus and he wishes to portray Oedipus as not even waiting to be accused before he turns the tables on the prophet and accuses him of plotting the deed.²⁷ The poet will also, then, be counting on his audience's familiarity with the convention of accusing one's accuser, a convention whose employment here is, like so much in this play, freighted with dramatic irony. For the accused is, in this instance, guilty, as the accuser and the audience, but not the accused, are well aware.

This convention is a commonplace of the tragic stage, and it regularly occurs in the course of a direct, face-to-face confrontation between characters, as in the case of Oedipus and Teiresias. But, unlike the instances we surveyed among the orators, the counter-accusations in tragedy often are not merely gratuitous vituperation but relate directly, sometimes tellingly, to the original accusation. That is certainly the case with Oedipus. He knows – or, rather, "knows" – that he is not guilty. If he can successfully fix responsibility for the murder of Laius preemptively on Teiresias (or, later, on Creon), he will have succeeded in refuting the charge about to be made against him. That is not to say that we cannot find irrelevant one-upmanship in exchanges on the tragic stage. In Sophocles' *Ajax*, for example, Teucer responds to Agamemnon's abusive remarks regarding his illegitimate birth from a non-Greek mother (1228–31, 1235, 1259–63) by taunting Agamemnon for having a Phrygian grandfather (1291–92). This is just one of the many insults shot back and forth by the characters in the second half of this play, which is filled with verbal dueling, or "flyting" (Hesk 2003: 113–18), a practice that is by no means confined to the ancient Greeks (Collins 2004: 231–35).

There is a difference, however, between the exchange of verbal abuse in this scene and, say, the mutual accusations of cowardice between father and son in Euripides' *Alcestis*. Admetus disowns his father and forbids him to participate in the funeral for Alcestis, alleging that his father's faintheartedness (642), manifested in his refusal to die in place of his son, proves that they cannot be related by blood. With an irony that is characteristic of Euripides, Admetus claims that he must rather be the child of slaves (638–39), who were normally thought to be the embodiment of cowardice (Hunt 1998: 160–64). When his father responds by accusing Admetus in turn of being a coward (694–97), he is not engaging in pointless verbal abuse. Had Admetus bravely faced his appointed doom and not solicited another to die in his place (15–17), the current situation would not have arisen. The charge of cowardice is in fact directly relevant to Admetus' allegation that the man to whom he is speaking is not his father, an allegation that was based on the supposed impossibility of his being descended from a coward.

Alcestis, produced in 438 BC, is the earliest surviving play of Euripides. We saw (in this chapter, p. 197) that this same scene in the play exhibits a sophisticated instance of the rhetorical figure of *prokatalipsis*. George Goebel acknowledges this but still argues (1983: 276–80) that the speeches of Admetus and his father do not show evidence of the influence of formal rhetorical technique, particularly in contrast with the highly rhetorical confrontation between Jason and Medea in Euripides' *Medea*. In this Goebel is following Eduard Norden (1909, vol. 1: 76 n. 2), who notes the contrast between the two plays and concludes from it that we can therefore securely date the influence of “sophistic theories” on Euripides to the years between 438 and 431 BC, the date of *Medea*. We saw in the previous chapter, however, that Euripides' *Cretans*, which is almost certainly earlier than *Medea* and may even antedate *Alcestis*, contains an explicit argument from probability, which Plato associates intimately with both the rhetorician Tisias and the sophist Gorgias (*Phaedrus* 267a). It is interesting to note that the same speech in *Cretans* in which Pasiphae uses the argument from probability contains another instance of the accused accusing the accuser. Again, it is not a matter of incidental vituperation, as is so often the case in the later orators, but a quite rational argument designed to deflect culpability onto another person, in this instance the accuser: If the accuser is the guilty party then the accused is exonerated. This is, obviously, a much more compelling argument than the mere ascription of viciousness to the accuser, which usually does not entail the exculpation of the accused. We may call this argument the *immo tu* argument, in contrast to the *tu quoque* argument with which the works of the Attic orators abound. The

father of Admetus confidently uses the *tu quoque* argument because, in his case, the attribution of cowardice to his son is sufficient for his purposes. Pasiphae, however, hopes by affixing blame on her husband to avoid punishment for her acknowledged misdeed. (As it happens, her attempt at persuasion is unsuccessful, not because her grasp of rhetorical technique is faulty but because her accuser is also her judge and executioner.)

Euripides' *Cretans* has not survived, but the speech of Pasiphae is preserved on a leaf from a parchment codex written in the second century after Christ (frag. 472e Kannicht). The leaf was lost during the Second World War, but fortunately a facsimile and expert transcription had earlier been published (Schubart and von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1907: 73–79, with Pl. IV). Even more fortunately, the leaf has recently resurfaced in the basement of the National Museum in Warsaw, and it is hoped that it will someday be made available again for inspection (Cozzoli 2001: 42–43). At any rate, throughout her speech Pasiphae directly addresses her husband Minos, who had accused her of infidelity in a scene that has not been preserved.²⁸ In the opening line of her speech (4), she acknowledges that denial of the charge will not suffice to persuade her husband that she is guiltless, for she did indeed mate with a bull and gave birth to the Minotaur in consequence. But the blame rests with Minos himself, who failed to sacrifice the bull to Poseidon as he had vowed to do (23–24). That is the reason for the god's punishment of Minos, which has taken the form of compelling Minos' innocent wife to commit adultery with a beast, thereby depriving Minos of a legitimate – or even a thoroughly human – heir (25–26). Pasiphae continues to abuse her husband and to proclaim her own innocence (29, 40), for the assignment of blame to him can properly be presented as entailing her own lack of guilt. Minos reacts by commenting on his wife's verbal dexterity. As Christopher Collard notes in his commentary on the speech (Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995: 77), Minos here uses the same verb (ἐστόμωται, 44) that Strepsiades will use in Aristophanes' *Clouds* when he hands his son over to The Worse Mode of Discourse for training to be a sophist (1107–11). In introducing Pasiphae's speech, Collard says (in Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995: 73), "Euripides makes Pasiphae exploit the techniques adopted by a contemporary law-court defendant," and he compares for the "counter-accusation" Antiphon's third *Tetralogy* and Gorgias' *Palamedes*. But these two speeches are every bit as fictitious as Pasiphae's defense and therefore provide no more evidence of contemporary forensic practice than does Euripides' tragedy. Further, there is no reason to believe that either Antiphon's or Gorgias' work is earlier than Euripides' play. In any event, as we have seen, Palamedes makes a point of *refraining* from engaging in

counteraccusation. This is, indeed, credible evidence for the prior existence of the practice, but the earliest attested occurrence of the practice is on the tragic stage, not in a court of law. And, on the tragic stage, the counteraccusation occurs in a speech in which the “defendant” addresses the accuser directly. I suggest that it is in imitation of this tragic convention that the defendants in Antiphon’s *Tetralogy* and Gorgias’ *Palamedes* turn away from the jury and direct their counteraccusation, or refusal to engage in the practice, to their accusers.

A character in a tragedy has a substantial advantage over both the defendant and the accuser in a legal action, in that the tragic character’s speech is prepared by the same person who supplies the arguments to the character’s opponent. But that is precisely the point, and that is why we are more likely to discover the origins of rhetorical technique on the tragic stage than in a court of law or the popular Assembly. Gorgias seems to have been the first writer of prose to appreciate the truly novel character of tragic composition, thereby demystifying tragedy for the Athenians. He unmasked the deception that lies at the heart of the tragic experience, exalting the tragic poet as “more honorable” for having succeeded in deceiving a theater full of spectators (frag. 23 Diels–Kranz). Further, he recognized that, in a dispute on the tragic stage, *both* characters are using arguments in support of a fiction. Each character’s presentation is equally valid as an “account” of the “facts of the matter,” because, unlike what happens in a court of law, the situation dramatized on stage does not correspond to some imagined “reality” of which the dramatization is merely a reflection.²⁹ The only thing that is relevant is the *form* of the argumentation. The true origin of rhetoric, then, can be found in the recognition that words create their own reality (López Eire 2007); they are not some pallid image emanating from existing things, like reflections of material objects seen in a pool of water. It is easy to see why Plato had little sympathy with Gorgias or with rhetoric so understood, and it is surely not accidental that the word “rhetoric” was seemingly coined by Plato in his dialogue *Gorgias* (Schiappa 1990, 2003: 219–25).

At the same time, as a verbal technician of the highest accomplishment himself, Plato was appreciative of Gorgias’ skill and his recognition of the power of words. But for Plato verbal proficiency cannot be an end in itself; rather it subserves an independently existing reality. In the dialogue named after him, Plato pays tribute to Gorgias but also makes clear how he differs from his celebrated predecessor. Gorgias, whose brother was a physician, speaks of his rhetorical skill in terms of, and even as superior to, the medical art: When his brother and other doctors were unable to induce their

patients to submit to treatment, Gorgias succeeded where the professionals failed, using nothing more than the art of rhetoric (456a–b). For Plato, however, rhetoric is merely a form of blandishment (463a–b). Continuing Gorgias' analogy with medicine, Plato has Socrates set up a series of proportions, among which is this: As the art of the chef is to that of the physician, so rhetoric is to the genuine pursuit of justice (465c).³⁰ Contrary to Gorgias' view, so far from rhetoric being on a level with the profession of the physician, it is, rather, analogous to the competence of the culinary artist, who knows only how to please the palate and is ignorant of what is truly in the best interests of the body in which the palate is lodged.

In composing his *Apology of Socrates*, Plato faced one of the most delicate challenges ever to confront a creative artist. Above all, he sought to present Socrates as doing nothing more than telling the truth (17b, 18a, 20d, 22a–b, etc.). Telling the truth, however, was not going to avert the miscarriage of justice that Plato and his readers knew would follow upon Socrates' speech in his defense. Indeed, as Xenophon suggests in his own account of the trial (*Apology* 32), the speech that Socrates delivered actually contributed to the unjust verdict approved by a majority of the jurors. In creating his version of Socrates' defense Plato could have done what Xenophon does, present Socrates as deliberately courting condemnation as a way of ending his life at the right time and by the most convenient means possible (*Apology* 7). By doing so Plato would have created a rhetorical display that was successful in attaining its persuasive goal. Instead, he followed the lead of Gorgias who, in his *Defense of Palamedes*, produced a rhetorical tour de force that nonetheless failed to secure the acquittal of a man doomed by the corrupt nature of his society. What Gorgias' motive was in creating a model of rhetorical technique that was known to have failed in its aim to persuade can only be guessed. In the case of Plato's *Apology*, however, by producing a rhetorical masterpiece that appeared to be incapable of prevailing upon the audience at which it was directed, Plato successfully accomplished a number of seemingly incompatible goals. Above all, he succeeded in beguiling generations of readers into believing that the Socrates he portrayed was doing nothing more than telling the truth. In addition, he produced a dazzling rhetorical display that rivaled and, indeed, eclipsed his Gorgianic model, at the same time elevating Socrates to heroic status by associating him, both implicitly and explicitly (41b), with the mythical Palamedes. By outdoing Gorgias with his own verbal dexterity, while still attaining the same negative result, Plato makes even more powerfully the point that he will make in his *Gorgias*, that artful rhetoric may be entertaining and agreeable to the palate but is irrelevant to the genuine pursuit of

justice.

The sophistication of Plato's *Apology* is manifested in the appearance of any number of rhetorical commonplaces (this chapter, n. 7), among which is the practice we have been examining, that of leveling at one's accuser the same charge for which one is on trial. As we have seen, however, scholars have found fault with the logic and even the relevance of Socrates' interrogation of Meletus. After all, it ought to have been obvious to so accomplished a thinker as Plato (or Socrates) that accusing Meletus of being indifferent to the welfare of the young, as Socrates does at 24c, 24d, 25c and 26a–b, cannot exonerate Socrates from the accusation of corrupting the young. This is nothing more than an instance of the *tu quoque* fallacy to which today's students of elementary logic are introduced early in their course of study. But there is more going on here than a simple denigration of Socrates' accuser. Socrates begins the interrogation by claiming that he will demonstrate (ἐπιδείξαι, 24c) that Meletus is pretending to be seriously concerned with matters to which he has never paid the slightest attention. His first question to his opponent is whether Meletus considers it of the utmost importance that the young be the best that they can be, to which Meletus naturally answers that he does. If the interrogation ends up by showing – as in fact it will – that Meletus has never paid the slightest attention to something that he claims to consider of the utmost importance, Socrates will have embarrassed his accuser, but will by no means have established his own innocence. The way he goes about his demonstration, however, is most unusual, and has caused Plato to be criticized for irrelevance and incompetence. Socrates' questioning results in Meletus' emphatically confident assertion (πάνυ σφόδρα ταῦτα λέγω, 25a) that Socrates is the only Athenian who corrupts the young. As John Burnet points out, this "is against all analogy" and contradicts the genuinely Socratic position that, in any given area of expertise, there is only one person or at most a very few whose advice deserves to be followed (1924: 107, referring to *Crito* 47a ff.; cf. *Apology* 20a–b). What has not been recognized, however, is that, by extracting this admission from Meletus, Socrates has secured Meletus' tacit acknowledgment that this is one of those rare instances in which the *immo tu* argument is in fact valid. If there is only one Athenian who corrupts the young while everyone else in the city improves them – surely not a position that Socrates, or Plato, would adopt, but one that has now been endorsed by the opposition – Socrates can legitimately exonerate himself merely by showing that Meletus has never given any thought to the improvement of the young, which is what he claims to have demonstrated at 25c. Further, as Socrates has shown by the account of his conversation with Callias (20a–c), the education of the young is very much on his mind.

Therefore, Meletus is a much more promising candidate than Socrates for designation as the lone corrupter of the young of Athens. And if, as Meletus asserts, there is only one corrupter and everyone else is an improver of the young, then Socrates must be one of the improvers, validating his claim to be, according to the standard rhetorical topos, a benefactor to the community (30a, 31a–b, 36c–d).

There is a further irony, undoubtedly intended by Plato. The conversation with the fabulously wealthy Callias, who “paid out more money to sophists than everyone else put together,”³¹ involved Socrates’ interrogation of Callias regarding the education of his sons. Since Callias had the resources to procure the best possible training for his sons and had surely investigated the matter, Socrates asks him to whom he intends to entrust his sons to be educated. In response, Callias names the sophist Euenus of Paros, who is mentioned also in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (267a), in the company of Gorgias, Tisias, Prodicus, and others who made innovations in the study of rhetoric. The contributions of Euenus that are singled out for approbation by Socrates with ill-disguised irony are the invention of “surreptitious exposition,” “oblique commendation” and, according to some, “oblique condemnation,” technical terms that are not encountered elsewhere and regarding whose meaning Friedrich Ast has rightly said that “it is not worth the effort to conduct a painstaking inquiry into these absurdities.”³² Although Plato obviously has nothing but contempt for the sophists who indulge in these absurdities, he manages in the *Apology* surreptitiously to expose the folly of people like Callias who squander large sums to have this nonsense inflicted on their sons and he engages skillfully in oblique condemnation of Euenus, whom he claims to regard as “blest” (20b–c), and oblique commendation of himself, when he self-effacingly shows that his reputation for wisdom arises, paradoxically, from his recognition that he is of no consequence when it comes to wisdom (23a–b).

What Plato has done, then, is to surpass even the sophists in exploiting rhetorical devices, and he has done so in the service of his campaign to undermine and devalue sophistic skill. We began this chapter by raising the question of why Plato included in his *Apology* an apparently inapposite attack on his accuser, an attack that would seem to be especially ill advised in view of Palamedes’ magnanimous refusal to attack his accuser in the Gorgianic speech with which the *Apology* is on some level engaging. The only way, it seems to me, of rescuing Plato from suspicion of incompetence is to assume, as we have done here, that Plato has constructed the interrogation of Meletus in such a way as to convert this section of the defense of Socrates from a manifestly irrelevant *tu quoque* argument into the intellectually respectable *immo tu*, an argument that can here be

employed only with the willing consent of Socrates' accuser, which consent is enthusiastically granted. Socrates thus provides a sample of the interrogatory technique for which he was famous and which provoked the animosity against which he needed to defend himself (22e–23a). At the same time he goes Gorgias' Palamedes one better. He manages to attack his opponent, something that we saw to be a favorite tactic of defendants in the speeches of the Attic orators despite the irrelevance of the *tu quoque* argument, but he does so in a way that enlists his opponent's participation in making the argument relevant. Ordinarily the *immo tu* argument is not appropriate for use by a defendant in a court of law. It is a legitimate argument only in the case of a violation that is limited to a single perpetrator. There is only one man who can have been responsible for biting off and swallowing the nose of the man from Tanagra (Demosthenes 25.60–62); the likelihood of his being able to convince a jury that it was not he who committed the crime but, rather, the very man who is accusing him is remote in the extreme. The number of corrupters of the young, on the other hand, can plausibly be represented as being more than one, unless one does what Socrates does in Plato's *Apology* and manipulates one's opponent into agreeing that there is only a single offender.

Only rarely does the accuser's guilt entail the innocence of the accused. Where we find such situations represented is not in the works of the Attic orators but in the tragedies of the Attic dramatists. We find it also in Gorgias' *Defense of Palamedes*, whose wholly innocent speaker is the victim of a devious plot on the part of the speaker's accuser. But the story of Palamedes is, of course, itself a product of mythical accounts and was, as we have seen, dramatized by at least one playwright before Gorgias thought to put a speech for the defense into his mouth. That does not prove that Gorgias was more heavily influenced by Attic tragedy than by current rhetorical theory. What we have seen, however, is that rhetorical practice – we have no direct access to rhetorical theory before the time of Aristotle and the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* – in general seems to be derivative of the practice exhibited by the masters of fifth-century drama, and we have seen no reason to believe that rhetorical theory was any different. The extent of what we know of fifth-century rhetorical theory has to do with the argument from probability and with the organization of the elements of speeches; as we saw in Chapter 8, the originality of the theorists in those respects is questionable. In this chapter we examined the practice of the orators and the dramatists and found that here too the creativity and originality of the latter outshone that of the former. In Part 1 of this study, we have proposed a reason for this priority, namely, the requirement that playwrights marshal arguments for

opposing speakers to deliver before a numerous audience, arguments that are often concerned with serious matters of causation and responsibility. We know that the birth of tragedy predates the beginnings of rhetoric and we know that Gorgias, for example, who was not even Athenian, was fascinated by the works of the pioneering dramatist Aeschylus. We cannot prove that rhetoric owes its existence to the influence of the new and instantly popular dramatic genre. But I suggest that, as a hypothesis, it is both more plausible and more attractive than the single “fact” on which the traditional view is constructed, namely, Cicero’s quotation from a lost work of Aristotle to the effect that Tisias and Corax were the first to lay down the foundations of the art, sometime after the overthrow of the Sicilian tyrants, the last of whom died in the same year that the nearly 60-year-old Aeschylus produced his *Seven against Thebes* in Athens.

¹ Similarly, Brickhouse and Smith (1985: 472): “So long as Socrates’ interrogation of Meletus involves no actual argument against the truth of the charges ... it is no more than an *ad hominem* diversion from the issue before the court.”

² See Geffcken (1973), Halliwell (1991), Harding (1994), and Hall (1995: 56–57).

³ Plato, *Apology* 41b; and Xenophon, *Apology* 26.

⁴ See Barrett (2001) for a recent account, with a listing of the parallels (26–30) and with earlier bibliography, to which may be added Biesecker-Mast (1994), Meron (1995–1996), Cunsolo (1999), and Tindale (2010: 121–25).

⁵ The *Apology* likely dates from the mid-380s (Heitsch 2002: 177–80), at which time the centenarian Gorgias was still alive (Ioli 2010: 14). Coulter (1964: 300 n. 2) and Consigny (2001: 222 n. 6) note that we do not know for sure which work was written first, but neither regards the priority of Plato’s *Apology* as a serious possibility.

⁶ It should be noted that Aristotle did not share our discomfort; see *Rhetoric* 1418b40–19a19, where Plato’s *Apology* is cited as a model of how to conduct an interrogation of one’s opponent.

⁷ *Apology* 17d: “I am, as it were, a foreigner when it comes to the manner of speaking here (i.e. in the court).” For the many

rhetorical commonplaces attested in the *Apology*, see Riddell (1877: xxi–xxii), Meyer (1962: 51–65), and De Strycker and Slings (1994: 31–33).

⁸ *Rhetoric* 1419b4–5 = Gorgias frag. 12 Diels–Kranz; cf. already Aristophanes, *Wasps* 566–67.

⁹ Need for more time: *Apology* 19a, 24a, and 37a–b; compare *Gorgias* 455a, and *Theaetetus* 201a–b. Interestingly, Gorgias’ Palamedes makes the same point (*Defense of Palamedes* 34). For Plato, serious intellectual pursuits require the investment of considerable amounts of time: Gaiser (1959: 208–10).

¹⁰ Compare Danzig (2003: 315): “By arguing that few people if any know what is a good or a bad man ..., he [i.e., Socrates] undermines any claim that the court could make to possessing the competence necessary to make decisions concerning human beings.”

¹¹ Usher defines the term in his glossary (1999: 367) as follows: “Anticipation of the opponent’s statements, pleas, or arguments.” To be fair, his use of the term elsewhere in the book (some 20 times according to the index) adheres to this definition. Other appropriate applications of the term may be found in M. Lloyd (1992: 30–31, 38, 46) and Whitehead (2000: 56–57, 304–5, 326). For references to ancient definitions, see Lausberg (1998: § 855).

¹² The translation here and throughout is that of E.S. Forster in Ross (1924).

¹³ *Apology* 17d, 20e, 21a, 27b, 30c. See Meyer (1962: 51), Bers (1985), and Thomas (2011).

¹⁴ Euripides frag. 797 Kannicht = F 16 Müller, in the translation by Collard in Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004: 23).

¹⁵ For discussion, see Müller (2000: 428–31), and Collard, Cropp, and Gibert (2004: 8, 32).

¹⁶ For example, Plato *Apology* 30a, 36c–d; Antiphon 2.2.12; and Lysias 3.47, 5.3, 7.31, 12.20, 19.57, 21.1–11, 25.12.

¹⁷ For the frequency with which defendants brought their

children to the trial in order to arouse pity, see Whitehead (2000: 64) and MacDowell (1990: 321). In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates speculates that some members of his jury will perhaps hold it against him that he has *not* done what most defendants do and has refrained from bringing his children into court (34c).

¹⁸ For the influence that such public service was expected to exert over juries, see Ober (1989: 226–30) and Johnstone (1999: 93–108).

¹⁹ For the degree to which Plato was familiar with and influenced by the works of Euripides, see Sansone (1996b).

²⁰ 945–50. For the argument that it is pointless to blame mortals for being unable to resist the power of love when even the gods are not immune, see *Hippolytus* 451–59; Sophocles, frag. 684 Radt; Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen* 19; and Plato, *Symposium* 196d.

²¹ Plato, *Apology* 30a. For the rhetorical strategies in the *Apology*, see note 7, this chapter. After the jury has voted to condemn him and Socrates is required to propose a suitable penalty, he says that, instead of being punished, he should be rewarded, since he has conferred the greatest benefit (τὴν μεγίστην εὐεργεσίαν, 36c) on each of the citizens.

²² It is not clear whether “the old man” is a reference to Priam (so Huys 1995: 158–59), to whom Hecuba refers simply as “the old man” at *Hecuba* 160, or to the elderly servant (for whom see Coles 1974: 21–22) who failed to expose the infant Paris and who appeared in the lost *Alexandros*, the first play of the trilogy to which *Trojan Women* belongs.

²³ For this common hyperbole, see Demosthenes 21.57, 87, 106, 22.1, 59, 23.100, 24.1, 19, 187, 59.28; Aeschines 1.8, 3.50, 212; Isaeus 3.54, 10.3, 13; and Dinarchus 2.19.

²⁴ Usher (1999: 247–49). It is unclear what the relationship is between the incident mentioned by Aeschines in *On the Embassy* 165 and the circumstances surrounding this speech, which does not involve a capital charge (Carey 2000: 150–51).

²⁵ Andocides uses a Sicilian word for “fox” (κίναδος, 99). Hickie (1885: 149) suggests, plausibly given what follows, that the word

is chosen for its similarity to *kinaidos* (see this chapter, p. 210), between which two words there is only the merest iota of a difference.

26 For the commonplace “it would be much more just” (πολλῶ or πολὺ δικαιότερον), see section 59; Lysias 1.49, 3.44, 4.13, 9.14, 16.7, 21.16, 25.29, 28.14; Isocrates 7.50, 12.186, 13.13, 15.35, 19.32; and Demosthenes 7.45, 26.12, 29.3, 34.48, 36.25, 40.61, 58.16.

27 For an ability to anticipate, and impatience with others’ failure to anticipate, as characteristics of Oedipus, see Knox (1957: 14–26, 187).

28 In lines 21 and 22 she refers to Minos in the third person, but damage to the parchment renders the text uncertain. From line 25 to the end of the speech, Minos is addressed consistently in the second person.

29 In his extraordinary treatise *On the Unreality of Things* (frag. 3 Diels–Kranz) Gorgias argues, first, that there is no reality; second, even if there is, it is not humanly comprehensible; and, third, even if it is comprehensible, it is not capable of being communicated or explained to someone else.

30 The same relationship exists between the art of the sophist and that of the legislator (465c). That is, Plato here takes sophistry and rhetoric to be (illegitimate) sister arts, the one operating in the Assembly and the other in the courtroom.

31 *Apology* 20a. For Callias, see J.K. Davies (1971: 254–70).

32 “Nec operae pretium est in has ineptias sedulo inquirere” (Ast 1829: 553). Euenus’ coinages are ὑποδήλωσις, παρέπαινος, and παράψογος.

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